

# Nepotism in state agency proving problematic

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

The state agency that decides whether teachers are fit for California classrooms has a record of hiring workers with family ties.

Last year, the employee roster included two sets of siblings, one father-daughter pair, and three instances in which the child of an existing employee was hired temporarily as a student assistant.

A recent audit found 40 percent of employees surveyed said that hiring and promotion at the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing are compromised by family relationships or favoritism – with 19 percent saying it occurs often.

The issue, one of many facing the commission at a legislative hearing this week, involves something that state agencies are not required to track: How often do they hire friends or relatives of employees?

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, in a letter to the commission, said the survey found hiring concerns that “strongly suggest the need for a shift to a more professional culture in the organization.”

Commission employees provided state auditors with the names of 24 past or present colleagues who they contend are related to each other – a number agency leaders say represents only a small percentage of the 160-member staff.

Yet 43 percent of respondents at the commission said they fear retaliation if they file a grievance or formal complaint.

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