

Background

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is currently in the middle of developing and implementing the Teacher Credentialing Service Improvement Project (TCSIP). The TCSIP will replace the current database system that collects and stores all of the information related to the Commission's mandated licensing and credentialing functions. The current system does not meet the ongoing and future functional or informational needs of the Commission. The current software does not integrate smoothly with external systems and the outdated software lacks a comprehensive Web-enabled application/renewal submission function. Further, the current hardware is outdated and acquisition of long-term support has become problematic. These deficiencies inhibit and limit the Commission's ability to serve credential applicants and holders efficiently and to provide remote access to data for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), counties, and other stakeholders.

The TCSIP will provide Web-based functionality and an improved database management system to improve quality of customer service by:

- Providing application status information and the ability for the public to check credentials held electronically,
- Implementing on-line submission and electronic payment of renewal applications, and
- Improving the Commission's ability to compile and analyze data, and prepare timely reports in response to policymakers' requests.

Each phase of the project offers new and increased efficiency:

- **Phase 1** is an interactive, Web-based self-service system for conducting credential status lookups and application inquiries. This on-line system allows credential applicants, credential holders, and stakeholders to use a Web browser to determine the status of a credential application or confirm the credentials held by an individual.
- **Phase 2** allows credential applicants to renew and pay for credentials via credit card on-line. By automating the renewal process, the Commission seeks to improve customer service and process credential renewals more quickly and efficiently.
- **Phase 3** entails designing an automated processing and reporting system that, through a common repository, will facilitate timely and accurate reporting of credential, disciplinary and examination program information to the Governor's Office, the Legislature, the Commission and stakeholders. The new system will replace the Commission's legacy database software and hardware.

Status

In June 2001 the Commission entered into a \$5.9 million contract with International Business Machines (IBM (Formerly PriceWaterhouseCoopers)) to serve as the contractor to develop and implement the TCSIP. The contract amount was increased to \$6.1million in September 2003, consistent with the 2003-04 Budget Act. Total project costs are estimated to be \$8.2 million. The additional \$2.1 million in project costs reflect funding used to supplement staffing costs during the project, staff resources already included in the Commission's operating budget, and a contract for independent oversight monitoring as required by the control agencies.

Phase 1 of the TCSIP was launched on schedule in October 2001, allowing Teachers, and Administrators to view the status of applications on-line and provided public access to teachers' various credentials on-line. This feature has proven to be very popular with over 1,000 hits per day on the web site. Feedback from County Offices of Education and IHEs has been very positive regarding the real-time access to credential holder information.

Phase 2 was successfully implemented in June of 2002 and allows credential holders to renew and pay for their credentials on-line. Currently approximately 3,000 credential holders are renewing their credentials on-line every month. This has resulted in faster processing time for these documents as well as decreased credential processing workload. The workload efficiency provided by the on-line renewal has been a critical accomplishment, as it has allowed the Commission to redirect staff to address the workload associated with vacancies that the Commission was not able to fill due to the statewide hiring freeze.

Phase 3 was initiated in July 2002. This is the largest and most complex phase of the TCSIP and includes the analysis and documentation of the business rules required for the programming of Phase 3, as well as the purchase and implementation of all new hardware. As reported at the October meeting, protracted negotiations surrounding the procurement of the computer hardware were finally resolved in September 2003. While this new hardware is critical to the success of Phase 3 of the TCSIP, as all technology projects in the state came under heightened scrutiny from the control agencies, the Commission's ability to move forward on this critical project procurement was blocked for nearly five months. However, with the support of the Department of General Services, the Commission was able to negotiate with the contractor, IBM, and the hardware supplier, Hewlett Packard, allowing the procurement to move forward.

Based on the current project schedule it is anticipated that design and programming will be complete in December 2003 and that Commission staff will complete testing of the entire new system in February of 2004. The testing stage is very intense, requiring staff to run over a thousand test scripts to verify that the system is functioning properly. We expect that Phase 3 will be fully implemented in Spring 2004 with the finalization of additional automation of the credentialing process.

Staff is available to answer any questions that members of the Commission may have.