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Information

Credentialing and Certificated Assignments Committee

Update on Streamlining and Efficiencies

Executive Summary: This agenda item updates the Commission on the activities the Commission staff has taken pertaining to streamlining and efficiencies of the Commission's business processes.

Recommended Action: None – Information Item

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Update on Streamlining and Efficiencies

Introduction

During the June meeting of the Commission's Executive Committee staff presented a list of twelve areas where further efficiencies and modifications could be made to its business processes. The Committee directed staff to review each of these areas and present its findings to the Commission. This agenda item updates the Commission on the steps staff is taking to research these areas of efficiencies and modifications.

Background

As a result of the budget crisis in California state government, Commission staff has been involved in a continuing effort to identify efficiencies and streamlining of its business processes. At the June meeting of the Commission's Executive Committee staff presented a list of 31 efficiencies staff has already implemented to improve efficiencies at the Commission. In that same agenda item staff listed twelve additional areas that could be considered for further efficiencies. Staff was directed to review those areas and return to the Commission with the findings. Three of those efficiencies require changes to existing statutes or regulations if they are to be implemented. With that in mind it was determined that the best method to move forward on these areas was to include the Commission's stakeholders. A meeting was convened on June 30, 2004 to present the following three areas of possible efficiencies:

- Explore regulatory and statutory options to eliminate assignment monitoring requirement and redirect staff to core processing function.
- Explore regulatory and statutory options to streamline requirements for out-of-state teachers.
- Explore statutory options to eliminate professional growth requirement.

The following stakeholders attended the meeting: Barbara Goldman (UC Office of the President); Sharon Robison and Steve Hope (Association of California School Administrators); Lori Easterling and Patricia Rucker (California Teachers Association); Stephanie Farland (California School Boards Association); Tangee Smith-Hill (Credential Counselors and Analysts of California); Carolina Pavia (Los Angeles Unified School District); Bruce Kitchen (Personnel Administrators from San Bernardino and San Diego Counties); Marilee Johnson (Glenn County Office of Education and PASSCo); James Suarez (Long Beach Unified School District); Kathryn Benson (Pajaro Valley Unified School District and Tri County Personnel Directors); Barbara Taylor (Department of Finance) and Jennifer Kuhn (Legislative Analysts Office).

Staff presented the materials in Appendix A to provide an understanding of the issues. A follow-up meeting was set for September 20, 2004 to give the stakeholder representatives an opportunity to meet with their organizations and return in September with input from their organizations. Staff will present the responses from the stakeholders at the September/October meeting.

Additional Efficiencies

Another efficiency that was presented to the Executive Committee pertained to a review of the regulatory and statutory options regarding requirements for child development permits. Staff reviewed these regulations and determined that the current requirements were still appropriate for the tasks that are performed in child development centers. Staff also reviewed the application process and determined that there could be a more efficient method to evaluate these applications. The majority of these applicants complete their course work at community colleges and community colleges have developed course work that is aligned to the child development permits, consequently those completing programs at community colleges have met the requirements for the permit. The Commission staff then reviews these transcripts to verify completion of the permit requirements. Since both the community colleges and the Commission are performing the same evaluation, Commission staff are working with the community colleges to develop a process to eliminate this redundancy.

Appendix A

Assignment Monitoring

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing has been charged with the oversight of the appropriate and legal assignment of certificated personnel since 1987. The Commission has attempted to achieve a balance between being certain that a certificated employee has the appropriate preparation to teach the subject to which he or she is assigned and the employer's need for assignment flexibility. The passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the California Department of Education is charged with reporting the number of highly qualified teachers in California. Is it redundant for the Commission and the county offices of education to monitor assignments when there is a highly qualified teacher reporting requirement? Attached is a comparison of the Commission's and county offices of education assignment monitoring responsibility with the NCLB reporting requirement.

Background

Since the initial Commission-directed study in 1982, the Commission has studied the extent of misassignment of certificated personnel, the causes of misassignments, practices that eliminate or minimize misassignments, and solutions to the problem of misassignment. In the initial study of school districts assignment practices, Commission staff monitored the certificated assignments in five school and five county offices of education during 1982-83. While the study found that many of the school districts and county offices understood the obligation to appropriately assign certificated staff and keep accurate assignment data, it also uncovered deficiencies in some of the districts and county offices. These included the area of communication between their offices and the school sites when assignments were changed at the school site level and in the misunderstanding of the specific authorization for each type of credential.

The Commission followed-up this report with a series of workshops in Spring 1984 to address assignment issues. These workshops brought to light several problems related to the assignment of teachers in the elementary and middle grades. In response, the Commission sponsored Senate Bill 511 (Craven) (Statutes of 1985, Chapter 490) to provide greater assignment flexibility at these grades.

Legislation signed in 1986, Senate Bill 2371 (Watson) (Statutes of 1986, Chapter 1279), required the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to conduct a statewide study of the misassignment of credentialed personnel. The Commission reported its findings and recommendations in a report to the Legislature in February 1987. Among its findings, the study concluded that 8% of the State's secondary teachers were illegally assigned for one or more class periods during the 1985-86 school year.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the study, the Commission sponsored Senate Bill 435 (Watson) which was signed into law October 1987. As a result, Section 44258.9 was added to the Education Code requiring each county superintendent of schools to monitor and review the certificated employee assignments in one-third of their school districts each year. The law also required that the Commission monitor and review certificated assignments for the State's seven single-district counties at least once every three years. Beginning July 1, 1990, county

superintendents were required to submit an annual report to the Commission summarizing the results of all assignment monitoring and reviews within one third of their districts. These reports include information on teaching assignments made under various Education Code options and identified misassignments. Beginning with the 1988-89 school year, Senate Bill 435 (Statutes of 1987, Chapter 1376) also established mandates for local monitoring activities that result in costs that were recoverable through the state mandated costs procedures. School districts and county offices of education submitted annual claims to the Office of the State Controller.

As part of the 1996-97 state budget negotiations, the Legislative Analyst recommended that all of the mandates on school districts and county offices of education related to certificated assignment monitoring be changed. As a result, Education Code Section 44258.9 was amended, effective January 1, 1996, to require each county superintendent of schools to monitor and review the certificated employee assignments in one-fourth of their districts each year and for the Commission to monitor the State's seven single district counties once every four years. At the end of a four-year cycle, the entire state has been monitored. Therefore, it is important to note that each year is a snapshot look at the assignments of certificated employees in the state. From the 1996-97 to 2001-2002 school years, \$350,000, was placed in the Commission's budget to distribute to the county offices of education for assignment monitoring activities. Districts no longer could claim funds under the section of the Education Code which required the districts to annually report to their governing board was eliminated. The monies are distributed to the county offices of education based on a pro rata basis. In the 2002-03 State budget the amount of money was reduced to \$308,000.

Certification of Out-of-State Prepared Teachers

For the past six years the Commission has worked to reduce barriers for out-of-state prepared teachers to earn California certification. At its June 2004 meeting, the Commission directed staff to review the current out-of-state certification structure and determine if it needs to be revamped. In light of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which sets a federal standard for highly qualified teachers, is it necessary for California to continue to require specific courses and tests to be certified in California? What problems have employers encountered when determining California certification? Should there be reciprocity between California and all other states? What knowledge and skills or professional development do out-of-state prepared teachers need to perform successfully in California classrooms?

Background

Prior to 1998, the Certification staff accepted as equivalent all teacher preparation programs that resulted in certification outside of California. Staff reviewed transcripts for the specific California statutory requirements such as reading, health, special populations and technology to determine if the candidate had completed them out of state. All out-of-state prepared teachers had to complete the subject matter requirement based on California standards, consequently the teacher had to complete the subject matter requirement in California. In 1998 the Commission sponsored AB 1620 (Chapter 547, Statutes of 1998, Scott), which was designed to facilitate access for both experienced and recently prepared out-of-state teachers and in 2000 sponsored AB 877 (Chapter 703, Statutes of 2000, Scott), which further streamlined the credentialing system by requiring that all out-of-state prepared teachers receive a five-year preliminary teaching credential.

Preliminary Multiple or Single Subject Teaching Credentials or Education Specialist Credentials are issued to out-of-state prepared teachers with a minimum of three or five years of experience by waiving specific California requirements. Teachers with a minimum of three years of experience who provide evidence of rigorous performance evaluations with a rating of satisfactory or better receive a five-year preliminary teaching credential. They must pass CBEST within one year of the issuance date of the credential for the credential to remain valid. These teachers are required to complete an induction program, such as Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, to obtain the professional clear teaching credential. Those with a minimum of five years of full-time teaching experience who meet the satisfactory evaluation requirement receive a five-year preliminary teaching credential and must pass CBEST within the first year of the credential. They are required to complete 150 clock hours of professional development to obtain the professional clear teaching credential.

Out-of-state prepared teachers who have less than three years of experience receive a five-year preliminary teaching credential based on the following criteria: (1) the individual possesses a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education; (2) completed a teacher preparation program at a regionally accredited institution of higher education; and (3) earned or qualified for a corresponding teaching credential based upon the teacher preparation program. These teachers must pass the CBEST before or during the first year of the validity of the document to continue employment based on the credential.

They have five years during the period of the credential to complete any remaining requirements leading to the professional clear credential, including subject matter verification, reading instruction, knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, computers, mainstreaming, and health education, and a fifth year program unless these requirements can be verified by Commission staff as having been met previously. Teachers have the option of completing an induction program in lieu of a fifth year program. In addition to these requirements (with the exception of mainstreaming and the fifth year program) special education teachers must satisfy the requirements in regular education pedagogy and supervised field experience in regular education, and the requirements for the Professional Clear (Level II) Education Specialist Instruction Credential.

Professional Growth Credential Renewal Requirement

Teachers who have earned credentials since 1985 have been required to complete professional growth requirements every five years to renew their teaching credentials. Should the professional growth requirements be decoupled from the credential renewal requirements? Do employed teachers meet the professional growth requirements based on professional development opportunities offered by employers?

Background

Professional growth requirements were established to institutionalize the concept of lifelong learning in the state's certification structure. There are two specific requirements: 1) 150 hours of professional growth activities (e.g., workshops, conferences, courses, study projects) that enhance the educator's ability to serve in the current position or one in which they expect to serve in the future, and 2) The equivalent of a semester of full-time school service during the five-year term of the credential. The first credentials to carry professional growth requirements were professional clear multiple and single subject credentials. Those initially issued on or after September 1, 1985 incurred the requirements. Services credentials began to carry the requirements July 1, 1994, and designated subjects credentials followed in 1996.

The credential holder documents completion of professional growth requirements using two forms created by the Commission, the Plan and Record form for the 150 hours of activities, and the Verification of Successful Service for the service requirement. The credential holder and the holder's professional growth advisor complete the Plan and Record form. The credential holder notes both general professional growth goals and specific activities to be completed, and the advisor pre-approves the goals and each activity. Once an activity is completed, the advisor is to verify completion by initialing the form. The Commission has established acceptable domains and categories of professional growth activities, and the credential holder and advisor also have to make sure that each activity fits into an acceptable domain and category. A minimum of two categories (types) of activities must be represented in the 150 hours. The credential holder's employer must complete the Verification of Service form. Both forms, as well as a description of the domains and categories, as well as other pertinent information, are all found in the Professional Growth Manual, published by the Commission. Previously, the credential holder included the Plan and Record form and Verification of Successful Service with the renewal application, and staff reviewed both forms. In 1999 the Commission created a new application form that includes a section in which the credential holder signs a statement that they completed professional growth activities. The statement is generally accepted in lieu of the forms, but a percentage of these applications are drawn for an audit, in which case the credential holder's advisor is contacted to check to see that the activities were actually done. The two forms may also be requested during the audit process.

Commission staff serves as the credential holder's professional growth advisor as a last resort, only in circumstances in which the teacher does not have access to an advisor locally. Generally, Commission staff serves as advisors for teachers who are not currently employed or are teaching in another country. The percentage of teachers advised by Commission staff is very small, but as more professional clear credentials are issued over time, the number of teachers we advise continues to increase. Ideally, professional growth advisement includes several face-to-face

discussions to establish goals and discuss appropriate activities; to update the form periodically by revising goals, verifying completion of earlier planned activities and planning and approving new ones, and then finally completing the form with verification signatures. When Commission staff serves as the advisor there tends to be limited conversation about the activities and goals, and only very occasional interaction over the five-year term, often only involving mailing the verification forms back and forth to complete required documentation.