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Information/Action

Executive Committee

Should the Commission Assign Credential Waiver and Commission Appeal Authority to Staff?

Executive Summary: This agenda item outlines the benefits and issues of assigning Commission staff the authority to issue credential waivers and grant Commission Appeals.

Recommended Action: The Commission may wish to grant staff the authority to issue credential waivers and Commission Appeals effective July 1, 2006.

Presenter: Dale Janssen, Director,
Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 2

Continue to refine the coordination between Commissioners and staff in carrying out the Commission's duties, roles and responsibilities

- ◆ Continuously update the Commission's policies and procedures

Should the Commission Assign Credential Waiver and Commission Appeal Authority to Staff?

Introduction

At the request of Chair Schwarze, staff has prepared this agenda item to review the benefits and issues pertaining to staff being given the authority to issue credential waivers and Commission Appeals. The Appeals and Waivers Committee (A&W) makes decisions on all credential waivers and Commission Appeals and recommends action to the Commission. The Commission has been granting Commission Appeals for over 20 years and credential waivers for twelve years. The number of requests for credential waivers and Commission Appeals has dropped significantly over the past five years, consequently is there a need for the Commission to continue to take action on waivers and appeals?

Background

The A&W Committee of the Commission is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the Commission as a whole on Commission Appeals and credential waivers. The Commission Appeal process can be found in regulations and it allows the Commission to waive student teaching where a college or university is unable or unwilling to provide supervision in the applicant's current teaching assignment. In the past, the appeals were predominantly for applicants working in private schools. Senate Bill 57 (Chapter 269, Statutes of 2001, Scott) gave the Commission staff the authority to waive the student teaching requirement based on specific criteria outlined in the statute. Due to this change in statute, the A&W Committee reviewed three Commission appeals in 2005, down from eleven in 1999, and all were approved. In fact, the A&W Committee has approved every Commission Appeal during the past five years. On the rare occasion that a Commission Appeal is presented to the A&W Committee, it has been in situations where the applicant is no longer within the college or university service area. Regulations already assign staff the authority to grant appeals that allow additional time to complete credential requirements based on specific criteria.

The Commission has had the responsibility for granting credential waivers since July 1994. During those twelve years the Commission has developed criteria the staff and stakeholders use to determine the issuance of a credential waiver. Credential waivers have dropped by 70% from 2001-02 to 2004-05 and there continues to be a reduction in waivers for the 2005-06 year. Staff has evaluated and recommended to the A&W Committee over 22,000 waivers over the past five years. During that time the Committee requested additional information on one waiver and then granted it after the information was supplied.

Benefits

There are two benefits to the Commission and its stakeholders if the Commission were to grant staff the authority to grant both credential waivers and Commission Appeals. First, the Commission meetings would be streamlined. The A&W Committee has recently only taken a few minutes to take its actions, however up to fifteen minutes needs to be allocated. If the A&W Committee did not meet, the Commission would save up to 90 minutes a year. Secondly, the staff would be able to grant the credential waiver requests when they are submitted. Currently waiver requests can be held for up to three months between Commission meetings. Since the credential waivers are already treated on an expedited basis, staff should be able to process these applications within two weeks of receipt.

Issues

If staff were granted credential waiver authority, there would be reduced public input to the waiver process. The waiver process requires the employing agency's governing board to take action on credential waivers during its board meeting and it must be an action item. The waiver cannot be approved as a consent item or during a closed session. Public comment is also available at the A&W Committee meeting. However, there have been no public comments during the A&W Committee meeting for over eight years. The credential waiver process has become routine due to well established criteria approved by the Commission.

The total number of teaching credential waivers and the districts who have requested the waivers are available annually in the Teacher Supply Report. Staff also annually publishes an emergency permit and credential waiver report that provides a complete breakdown of all waivers issued during a fiscal year. If the Commission wishes, staff could post on the Commission's web page a monthly report of the credential waivers issued by staff.