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Information

Credentialing and Certificated Assignments Committee

Certification Division Workload Report for Fiscal Years 2011- 2012 and 2012-2013

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides workload data for the Certification Division for fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

Recommended Action: For information only

Presenter: Terri H. Fesperman, Director,
Certification Division

Strategic Plan Goal

IV. Operational Effectiveness

- ◆ Maintain appropriate response times for processing applications, investigating allegations of misconduct, monitoring conditions of Settlement Agreements, and answering inquiries from the field.

February 2014

Certification Division Workload Report for Fiscal Years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013

Introduction

This agenda item provides the Certification Division workload data for fiscal years (FY) 2011-12 and 2012-13. The report includes workload data concerning the intake, review, and processing of credential applications and data related to other core functions of the division including responses to public inquiries. A comparison with previous years as well as a look into the 2013-2014 FY is included.

Background

The Certification Division is responsible for issuing, on behalf of the Commission, documents that authorize service in public schools, communicating credential information to the field and to the public, responding to inquiries concerning individual credential applications, developing credential regulations, and maintaining accurate information via the Commission's online credential system. These functions are carried out by 45 staff organized into three units that do the following:

- *Cashiering* — This unit processes payments received with credential applications.
- *Support* — This unit processes fingerprint data submitted by applicants, converts information from microfilm jackets into the Commission's database, staffs the Commission's front office reception area, and provides general support to the Division.
- *Production* — Responsible for evaluating credential applications for all types of certification (including credentials, certificates, permits and waivers) to determine whether applicants meet statutory and regulatory requirements for the document requested and for responding to public inquiries by telephone, postal mail, and email. This unit works closely with the Commission's technology staff to maintain the online application system and works with state control agencies to implement regulations adopted by the Commission.

Credential Applications

The Commission has experienced a significant reduction in credential application volume over the past few years. Table 1 compares the applications *received* for the last five fiscal years. There was a reduction of less than 1% in total applications received between FY 2010-11 and 2011-2012. There was another reduction of 2% in applications received from FY 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. The number of applications submitted to the Commission declined by over 18% between 2008-09 and 2012-13.

In FY 2011-2012, the Certification Division received a total of 231,417 credential applications and issued 221,417 credential documents and in FY 2012-2013, the Commission received 220,287 credential applications and issued 202,070 credential documents. The data provided in

this report is based on the total applications received since there is workload associated with applications that do not result in the issuance of a document.¹

Table 1: Applications Received

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Online Renewals	113,045	112,379	108,605	117,908	109,717
Online Recommendations	62,245	61,208	51,670	47,312	44,298
Online Direct Applications	20,844	24,103	30,789	27,379	26,585
Paper Applications	79,734	50,442	42,037	38,818	39,687
Total	269,792	248,186	233,101	231,417	220,287

Online Renewals: Clear teaching and service credentials that do not require completion of additional requirements to renew. The application and fee are submitted online and the system processes the renewal within ten days.

Online Recommendations: Upon completion of Commission-approved teaching and services credential programs, a program sponsor recommends the educator for the credential. The application and fee are submitted online and the computer processes the document within ten days with minimal Certification staff review.

Online Direct Applications: This is a hybrid system of the online and paper application process. The application and fee are submitted online and the supporting materials are sent by postal mail and ‘matched’ with the online application. This process may be used by applicants prepared in California, out-of-state and outside the United States who do not require an institution's recommendation for the document. This includes teaching and services credentials as well as the Certificate of Clearance or the Activity Supervisor Clearance Certificate.

Paper Applications: Applications submitted by educators, employing agencies, and program sponsors that do not fall into any of the above categories such as emergency type permits, out-of-state and out-of country prepared educators, and child development permits.

Education Code section 44350 and Title 5 section 80440 requires the Commission to process all applications within fifty business days.² On average, the Certification Division processes applications within the statutory timeframe. Automated processing for online renewals and online recommended applications are processed within 10 days and the Certification Division strives to process all paper and online direct applications within 30 days. Processing time typically increases during late spring and summer when applications are at peak volume. Average processing timelines also increased slightly during the roll-out of the Commission’s

¹ Information on the specific types of certification that were issued in FY 2012-2013 will be included in the Teacher Supply in California - A Report to the Legislature: Annual Report which is scheduled for the April 2014 Commission meeting.

² Applications delayed by fingerprint processing and those requiring review by the Division of Professional Practice or Commission appeal are not subject to the statutory processing timeline.

new CTC Online system in 2011-12 and 2012-13. While the system enables Commission-approved programs and employing agencies to submit recommendations for credentials and additional authorizations, additional time was needed by staff during the initial startup of CTC Online to assist with the implementation, work out system “bugs” and assist program sponsors with the changes from the previous online system. For the current FY, average processing time has been between 16 to 34 days.

Related Application Workload

The Commission issues more than 90% of all credential applications it receives. Application packets must contain all of the documentation required to issue the credential requested, including a completed application form, appropriate fee(s), transcripts, verification letters, examination scores or other documents needed to meet requirements for the credential. Some applications are returned for additional information before a decision can be made to issue a document. Returned applications fall into two categories: 1) a Department of Justice request for new fingerprint information or 2) incomplete materials submitted that are needed to determine academic eligibility. It is important to note that applications returned for additional fingerprint or academic qualifications are not always resubmitted. Though not officially tracked at this time, the percentage of returned applications that are not resubmitted is estimated at approximately 50%.

Some applications require an additional review by the Division of Professional Practices (DPP) following the evaluation by the Certification Division for academic qualifications. While the subsequent work on these applications is completed by DPP, there is also a small workload for the Certification Division to evaluate and refer the applications to DPP.

Data for these processes in the last two fiscal years appears below in Table 2. Applications that are issued following the review of additional materials or the review by DPP are included in the numbers listed in the Background on page 1 of this item for total number of documents issued.

Table 2: Returned Applications and Applications Forwarded to DPP

	2011-2012	2012-2013
Paper and online applications returned for fingerprint or academic eligibility information	14,176 5,268 – fingerprint 8,908 – academic eligibility	11,077 1,346 – fingerprint 10,117- academic eligibility
Applications Evaluated and Forwarded to DPP	6,853	6,155

Communication

In addition to application processing, the Certification Division is responsible for communicating credential information to the field and to the public and for responding to inquiries by telephone, email and written correspondence. Efficiencies made in all three areas improved responses to all who contact the Commission for credentialing information.

Prior to the implementation of CTC Online, the Commission suspended telephone service on May 1, 2012 and individuals wishing to contact the Commission with credentialing questions were required to use email. On April 1, 2013, telephone service was reinstated and on August

1, 2013 a state of the art telephone system was established that includes both telephone service and a chat line feature.

By October 2012, the Certification Division had accumulated a sizeable workload of emails, numbering in the thousands, due to the launching of the CTC Online. As management deployed resources more efficiently, by December 2012, Certification staff began answering emails received the day before and overtime was used to reduce the email workload. Since February 2013, the Certification Division responds to emails within two business days. Occasionally an email requires more research before a response can be sent. The number of emails in both of the recent fiscal years is very high, as seen in the table below, due in part to duplicate emails that were sent during the time period following the implementation of the new online system in May 2012.

Written correspondence is split into two areas. Formal correspondence which includes letters referred to the Commission from members of the legislature or the Governor’s office as well as letters written to the Executive Director. Postal mail correspondence includes general certification questions. A new tracking system allows the Certification Division to monitor the response of all written correspondence. Table 3 is a summary of telephone calls, emails, formal, and postal correspondence. Numbers are not available for formal and postal mail correspondence for the first three years. The drop in correspondence in FY 2011-2012 is correlated to the increase in emails and the increase in emails in 2012-2013 is due to the suspension of telephone service.

Table 3: Communication

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Telephone Calls	46,825	40,186	45,263	34,201	4,893
Emails	54,154	45,510	32,961	30,832	39,590
Formal Correspondence	4,506	3,206	2,868	43	32
Postal Mail Correspondence				1109	1160

Other Types of Communication

Coded Correspondence and Credential Information Alerts (CIA): Coded Correspondence (CC) is the Commission’s official notification process. Certification staff wrote 13 CCs in FY 2011-2012 and 9 CCs in FY 2012-2013. CIAs are distributed by the Certification Division to employing agencies and program sponsors to clarify and provide additional assistance to programs and employers. The Division distributed 12 CIAs in FY 2011-2012 and 11 CIAs in FY 2012-2013.

Conferences, Workshops and Webinars: Certification staff present each year at conferences such as for Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and Credential Counselors and Analysts of California (CCAC) as well as workshops for Personnel Administrative Services Steering Committee (PASSCo) and California Association of Private Special Education Schools (CAPSES). Staff also conducts several webinars each year, including the annual Spring Credential Webinar to update the field on issues relating to certification.

Other Division Workload

To round out the workload of the Certification Division, here are other major programmatic duties in the divisions:

Title 5 Regulations: The Title 5 Regulatory process takes from six to twelve months from the concept agenda item to approval of the regulation by the CTC and the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). Following regulation approval, implementing the regulation includes distributing information to the field, training Certification staff, and monitoring the topic if additional clarification is needed. The Certification Division is responsible for the majority of regulation packages submitted to OAL. Typically, three active Title 5 packages were submitted, but in the last two fiscal years, there has been as many as seven Title 5 packages managed by the Certification Division staff.

Maintenance of CTC Online: The Certification Division is responsible that all content of the authorization and renewal codes used in CTC Online and the Commission's database are accurate. When changes occur as a result of legislation or regulations that effect certification documents, the staff works with the agency's IT Division to design the changes necessary to the online system. The work includes reviewing all types of certification that the change effects, reviewing the regulatory or statutory language, training certification staff, and ensuring that the changes made in CTC Online and the Commission's database are complete and accurate. In addition, suggestions from educators, employing agencies, and program sponsors are discussed and reviewed with the IT Division to determine if the system can be improved to benefit all that use the system.

Conversion of Microfilm Jackets: For many years, educator's credential history has been kept on microfilm. An educator's microfilm file is 'converted' to the Commission's database when an application for certification is received and the educator has not applied for a credential prior to 1989 (date the credential database was established). In addition, DPP may need an educator's information entered in the database system or employing agencies need conversion to issue a State Educator Identifier (SEID) number for employment purposes. For FY 2011-2012, 1,510 microfilm files were converted and FY 2012-2013, 1,300 files were converted.

Fiscal Year 2013-2014

A peek into the current fiscal year shows that credential applications for the first six months of 2013-14 are up approximately 7% over the same period last fiscal year. Emails continue to receive a response within two business days with approximately 26,000 emails received in the first half of the FY. As noted above, a state of the art telephone system began in August 2013. A new feature was a chat line which went into place at the beginning of November 2013. In two months, 779 chats were received. Telephone calls have decreased with approximately 11,000 thus far this FY.

Most importantly, staff is maintaining the appropriate ten or fifty day processing time. Thus far this fiscal year, the average processing time for paper and online direct applications is an average of 16 to 34 days. Division staffing remains at 45 members.

Next Steps

The Certification Division staff is committed to continuing the current level of service including responding to email within two business days, keeping application processing below the appropriate ten or fifty day requirement, following up on fingerprint issues in a timely manner, and sending pertinent and relevant updates to the field. A review of procedures and processes is currently underway with the intended outcome of improving the Division's current practices and communication with employing agencies and program sponsors.