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Information

Credentialing and Certificated Assignments Committee

Efficiencies From Technology in the Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division

Executive Summary: This agenda item reviews the application processing efficiencies from the Teacher Credential Service Improvement Project. The Commission will also be presented a timeline when further efficiencies will be implemented.

Recommended Action: Information

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Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 3

Provide quality customer service

- ◆ Provide timely, accurate and responsive processing of credential applications.

Efficiencies from Technology in the Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division

Introduction

In February 2005 the Commission implemented the Credential Automated System Enterprise (CASE), a new computer data base. CASE has allowed the Certification, Assignment and Waivers (CAW) Division an opportunity to implement a number of technology efficiencies including a Virtual Credentialing Officer (VCO), email notification process, and an Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) online recommendation process all setting the stage for CAW to move to reduced dependence on paper based applications.

Background

In June 2001 the Commission entered into a contract with International Business Machines [IBM (formerly PriceWaterhouseCoopers)] to serve as the contractor to develop and implement a three phase Teacher Credential Service Improvement Project (TCSIP). TCSIP was initiated because the old computer system was inadequate in response to current functional or informational needs of the Commission and the public. The antiquated technology did not integrate with external systems, lacked a comprehensive Web-enabled application/renewal submission function and was unable to serve the needs of the commission and its' stakeholders.

Phase 1 of the TCSIP was launched in October 2001, allowing teachers and administrators to view the status of applications on-line and provide public access to teachers' 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. This process is vital to future technological efficiencies.

Phase 2 was successfully implemented in June of 2002 and allows credential holders to renew and pay for their credentials on-line. Currently approximately 4,000 credential holders are renewing their credentials on-line every month.

Phase 3 was implemented in February 2005. This is the largest and most complex phase of TCSIP and includes the analysis and documentation of the business rules required for the programming of Phase 3, now known as CASE, as well as the purchase and implementation of all new hardware.

In order to develop new efficiencies that IHEs, county offices of education and school districts can utilize, CAW is working with an advisory group that consists of the following individuals, Carol Riley, CSUs (CSU, Long Beach), Mel Hunt, private and independent colleges (Saint Mary's College of California), Cynthia Free, large county office of education (San Diego), Mary Ann Garcia, small county office of education (Placer), Derek Ramage, large school district (Los

Angeles Unified School District), and Kathryn Benson, small school district (Pajaro Valley Unified School District). These individuals are providing ideas and technical support to implement technological efficiencies in processing credentials.

Current Efficiencies

Virtual Credentialing Officer

As stated above, since June of 2002 the Commission has been offering the online renewal of credentials. Between June 2002 and April 2005, the renewal process required that each online file be printed so certification staff could update the data. Phase 3 included the development of a fully automated renewal process termed the Virtual Credential Officer (VCO). When a teacher renews a credential online, the automated process enters all data including application and payment data into CASE without manual intervention. The only manual process required is that staff print the credentials and prepare the documents for mailing.

IHE Online Recommendation

In April 2005 with the implementation of CASE, the Commission started a pilot project that allowed three IHEs to submit applications via the Internet. As a result of that pilot a number of enhancements were made to the application that makes it easier for IHEs to use the system. In October 2005, the Commission staff starting training the 83 colleges and universities that offer approved professional preparation programs. By the end of October over 150 IHE personnel were trained on the online recommendation process. Since that time the number of applications received online by IHEs has increased and full implementation is envisioned by the end of January 2006, the end of the fall semester. As noted in the budget report to the Legislature and Department of Finance, CAW expects to be able to redirect 1600 hours annually to other credential types when the IHE process is fully utilized.

Email Notification

In September 2005, the Commission began sending email notifications to teacher applicants when their applications have been received by the Commission and when their document has been granted and mailed. The email contains the title of the credential, issuance and expiration date, authorizations, recommending institution, if applicable and agency restriction, if applicable. The email includes a link to the Commission's online lookup web page where the information about the credential is posted within 48 hours.

Paperless Certificates of Clearance

Effective January 3, 2006 the Commission ceased printing Certificates of Clearance. These certificates are issued to teacher candidates to allow them to student teach. The documents do not authorize a specific service; they verify that the candidate has completed the Commission's professional conduct review. Once the certificate has been issued the candidate and recommending IHE receive the email notification. Verification that a Certificate of Clearance has been issued is available on the Commission's online lookup web system and is the official record of issuance.

Future Efficiencies

Paperless County Copies of Documents

Currently the Commission electronically shares credential data with eleven counties. The eleven counties download the credential data on a weekly basis. The remaining 47 counties receive hard copies of the credentials. In order to become more efficient, CAW is in the process of developing an electronic delivery of the credential data to all county offices. Counties will be able to access the Commission's secure web site and download the credential data in an Excel file format. This will provide the counties with up-to-date credential data and eliminate the cost of printing and mailing. CAW anticipates implementing this process during late spring 2006.

Submission of County and School District Online Applications

As delineated above, Phase 3 of TCSIP included the online submission of IHE credential applications. CAW is now in the process of developing a method for county offices of education and school districts to submit 30-Day Substitute Permit applications online. It is anticipated that this process will be functional before the beginning of the 2006-07 school year.

IHE Online Recommendation VCO

Phase 3 of TCSIP included a VCO which is a fully automated online renewal process. The Commission's Information Technology staff is going to build upon the technology in the VCO to fully automate the IHE online recommendation process. The IHE VCO process is far more complex than the online renewal process and it is anticipated to take up to a year to develop. The goal for completion and implementation of this process is the spring of 2007. Once implemented, certification staff who are currently manually processing the IHE online recommendation applications will be able to concentrate on those applications that require in-depth evaluation.

Paperless Credential

The paperless certificate of clearance has set the stage for the advent of the paperless credential. Instead of a paper credential, the online lookup system would become the official record of the issuance of a credential. The paperless credential will eliminate the potential of a fraudulent document. There is a cost savings to the Commission in reduced paper, ink, envelopes, postage and staff time. There would also be a reduction in staff time at the county offices of education and school districts.

There are some technical issues that are to be resolved, for example, should an unofficial credential be available for printing off of the web and how does the Commission keep an official copy of the document.

There is also a possibility that the Education Code will need to be changed to make it clear that county offices of education can use the Commission's online lookup system as being the official record. These issues are being discussed with the stakeholder advisory group. At this time, CAW is predicting an implementation of the paperless credential by July 1, 2007.

These efficiencies will allow the CAW Division and the Commission to be more efficient in processing credential applications. Each automated process is allowing staff to devote time to the less routine tasks and concentrate on those applications that require a full in depth evaluation. A paperless, web based system presents obvious cost savings not only for the Commission, but its' stakeholders.