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Information/Action

Professional Services Committee

Update on Health Services (School Nurse) Credential Program Standards

Executive Summary: Staff will present a status report on the Health Services (School Nurse) Credential Program Standards, and two procedural options for updating these standards.

Recommended Action: Commission staff is seeking direction from the Commission regarding procedural options for updating the Health Services (School Nurse) Credential Program Standards.

Presenter: Dr. Phyllis Jacobson, Administrator, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal:

Goal 1: Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- Sustain high quality standards for the preparation of professional educators
- Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates

Update on the Health Services (School Nurse) Credential Program Standards

Introduction

The Health Services (School Nurse) Credential Program Standards, hereinafter referred to as the “School Nurse Credential Program Standards,” were initially approved in October, 1989. They were revised last in November, 1994. These program standards are now over eleven years old.

There are eleven approved School Nurse Credential Preparation Programs:

- Azusa Pacific University
- California State University, Bakersfield
- California State University, Fresno
- California State University, Fullerton
- California State University, Long Beach
- California State University, Los Angeles
- California State University, Northridge
- California State University, Sacramento
- California State University, San Bernardino
- San Diego State University
- San Jose State University
- Loma Linda University

The increased societal focus on health and wellness-related concerns in the classroom has resulted in school nurses being asked to use their professional expertise in an instructional capacity to help address these concerns. Therefore, additional program standards were developed in 1999 to allow school nurses who already had a valid credential to obtain an authorization to serve as teachers in the classroom for health-related instruction purposes only. In January 2000, draft regulations were approved by the Office of Administrative Law for the School Nurse Credential with an Authorization to Teach Health Classes (known as the “STAH,” or Special Teaching Authorization in Health). To date, there are two approved STAH programs, one at CSU Sacramento and the other at Loma Linda University.

The School Nurse Credential Program Standards (other than the STAH additional standards) do not reflect the new knowledge and skills that are needed today by school nurses. In recent years, there have been increasing numbers of students who are medically fragile, or who have special needs requiring the care and/or oversight of a school nurse, and the general knowledge base of the field has advanced well beyond the subject matter now covered by these program standards.

Nurse educators and school nurses have made the revision of the program standards a priority for their efforts, and have already begun on their own to look at ways to suggest revision of these program standards. This agenda item summarizes those efforts, and provides two options for proceeding with revising and updating the School Nurse Credential Program Standards.

Background

On February 2, 2005, an agenda item regarding the need to update the School Nurse Credential Program standards was presented at a regularly scheduled meeting of the California School Nurse Educators Coalition. This meeting was held in Hollywood in conjunction with the annual conference of the California School Nurses Organization. At the meeting, the Coalition board members reviewed a draft of a letter to be sent to the Commission formally requesting that the School Nurse Standards be updated. Several members had already made notations as to where the standards in particular needed attention. The Coalition offered to provide a vehicle for beginning this work through their discussions and through agreeing to meet again in conjunction with their next annual conference for the purpose of continuing to work on revising the School Nurse Credential Program Standards. The Coalition contacted the Commission in March 2006 with their concerns about the outdated nature of the current School Nurse Credential Program and restated their offer to provide assistance with revision of the School Nurse Credential Program standards.

The typical Commission process when revising and/or updating credential program standards is to invite nominations and applications from the field to serve on the standards review advisory design team/panel, to review these applications against specified criteria, and to recommend individuals to the Executive Director for appointment to the design team/panel. Once appointed, the design team/panel of approximately 8-12 members would hold several meetings at which the current set of standards would be reviewed against the most up to date standards, frameworks, curriculum documents and research in the field in order to identify needed areas of revision and/or updating. After the content domains of the standards had been identified and agreed upon by the design team/panel, a public input field survey would be undertaken to assure the validity of the content domains. The design team/panel would then review the results of the field survey and finalize the content domains of the standards. Next, new standards would be written to address the content domains.

Once finalized, these standards would be presented to the Commission initially as an information item, and subsequently for adoption by the Commission. At the time of adoption of the new or revised standards by the Commission, an implementation plan would be presented for transitioning the current programs to the new standards. All currently-approved School Nurse Credential programs would then need to respond in writing to the new standards within the specified timeframe in order to maintain their approved program status.

The process described above would address only the School Nurse Credential Program standards of 1994, and not the 2000 standards for the Special Teaching Authorization in Health which are not being recommended for updating at this time.

Procedural Option A for Updating the School Nurse Credential Program Standards

The first option for updating the School Nurse Credential Program standards would be to implement the process described above. Under this option, the Commission would seek nominations and applications to serve on the School Nurse Credential Program Standards design team/panel. Completing this phase of the process would take approximately two months. The

Commission would then need to fund an initial two-day meeting of the panel plus at least two one-day follow up meetings, whether held in Sacramento or elsewhere in the state. Smaller workgroups for rewriting specific standards could be facilitated in between meetings through the use of the Commission's Sparrow/Docushare Interact web-based technology. The process of updating the standards would take approximately 12-18 months to complete, and depending on the number and location(s) of the meetings, is estimated to cost approximately \$8000-\$10,000.

Procedural Option B for Updating the School Nurse Credential Program Standards

The second option for updating the School Nurse Credential Program Standards would be to take immediate advantage of the work already being done by the California School Nurse Educators Coalition. Since the membership of this group has voluntarily done the initial review of where the standards need revision and/or updating, the group could continue the work already begun at no cost to the Commission. The Coalition includes representatives of each of the School Nurse Credential Programs, and thus is already representative of the field. The Chair of the Coalition is the President of the California School Nurse Organization. Since the Coalition has more than 12 active members, the Coalition Chair would select up to a maximum of 12 members to serve on the design team/panel, but these members would provide an ongoing update to the rest of the group through their own internal communications network.

If Option B were implemented by the Commission, the Executive Chair could appoint the members of the Coalition identified by the Coalition Chair to be the design team/panel. Work could immediately begin through the use of the Commission's web-based technology (Sparrow/Docushare Interact) to identify both the standards that need to be revised and the new or additional content areas to be addressed within the standards. A field survey for public input, including extensive involvement and feedback from K-12 administrators and teachers, could be developed and implemented in late Fall 2006. At the next official Coalition meeting in conjunction with the annual School Nurse Organization conference in Santa Barbara at the end of January 2007, the design team/panel could potentially review the results of the field survey and finalize the content domains for the new standards. Then the panel could undertake the work of standards writing. This work would start at the Coalition meeting and continue in smaller workgroups through the use of the web-based technology. There would be one additional two-day meeting to be funded by the Commission where the design team/panel would review and finalize the draft of all of the standards. The estimated cost of this meeting would be approximately \$4500-\$5500.

Commission staff would then present these draft standards to the Commission for review and approval. It is estimated that the process would be completed within 8-12 months.

Commission staff is seeking direction from the Commission as to whether to proceed with updating the School Nurse Credential Program Standards, and if the process is to go forward, which of the two procedural options staff should more fully develop and bring back for action by the Commission.