



CERTALERT

Newsletter on Educator Certification Issues from the Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment, Division of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Connecticut State Department of Education

A Call to Duty—for Districts

When teachers who also serve in the National Guard or military reserves learn they are being deployed overseas, the last thing on their minds may be their certification. There is anxiety about their families and perhaps about what they will face personally. There is worry about their colleagues and students, and about the disruptions to their routines. Educators must wonder how to prepare, and how to help those around them with the coming changes and increased burdens and responsibilities caused by their approaching absence. There is plenty to worry about both before and during their deployment.

Now districts can help make certification one less thing to concern deployed teachers. The State Department of Education is requesting that districts notify the Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment whenever an educator is called up for active military service for an extended period of time. The educator will be sent a letter and copies of the forms to submit, along with detailed instructions. The application, forms and fees may be submitted early, along with a copy of the deployment letter. The application will be held in our office for processing before the expiration of their current certificate.



The hope is to minimize difficulties faced by those deployed in service to their country when educator certificates lapse. Making it easier to maintain certification will help educators receive all the benefits due to them while they are away, and after their return. If your district employs educators currently on active duty or about to deploy, please e-mail wendy.harwin@ct.gov.

CLICK HERE

CLICK THIS BUTTON IF AN EDUCATOR IN YOUR DISTRICT HAS BEEN CALLED FOR ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE.

HB7167 BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE

The Connecticut legislature recently passed a bill that would allow the State Board of Education to renew certificates that lapse while the holder is on active duty. This will minimize the harm to educators on those few occasions when certificates do lapse. Call your state representative for more information.

SPRING 2007

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SUBSCRIBE



Welcome back to CertAlert, your biannual e-newsletter on educator certification from the State Department of Education’s Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment. Please feel free to pass CertAlert along to anyone interested in Connecticut educator certification issues. For your convenience, this and all past issues are posted on our website at www.ct.gov/sde/cert. You can find them by clicking on “Publications.”

This is an exciting time for certification and for education in general in Connecticut. With the new Commissioner of Education at his desk, changes are approaching. New preparation programs are being reviewed and approved. Certification regulations are under review for revision. And Connecticut is finally replacing the outdated computer system used to track educator certification with a new cutting edge web-based system

that will allow candidates to apply online, use a credit card to pay fees, and will provide districts access to certification information.

We hope you enjoy this issue. When you have questions that others are probably asking as well, don’t forget to let us know how we can help! We continue to develop new features and tools in our efforts to make sure this newsletter meets your needs.

In this issue you will find information about a new Praxis II test requirement for early childhood education, coaching permits, 90-day certificates, and CEUs. You will also find a new feature contributed by the Teachers’ Retirement Board, and resources such as a reproducible handout you may want to distribute to parents of children in classrooms assigned a student teacher.

Please let us know what information or features would be helpful to you. We need



your feedback! You might also consider submitting an opinion article. What is on your mind? We look forward to hearing from you.

NANCY L. PUGLIESE, *Chief*
Bureau of Educator Preparation,
Certification, Support and Assessment

CERTIFICATION NEWS

Educator Preparation Program Approval

Many educators ask: How do institutions get approved or accredited to train teachers for certification? By statutory and regulatory authority, the State Board of Education is responsible for the approval of educator preparation programs. The process is ongoing, with each of the 19 approved institutions following its own cycle of reaccreditation.

During the next two school years, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will conduct at least 10 approval visits of Connecticut educator preparation programs. See box for a list of the institutions scheduled for visits.

2007-2008 Approval Visits

- Quinnipiac University
- Mitchell College
- Connecticut College
- Fairfield University
- Sacred Heart University
- CREC Spec. Ed. Cross-Endorsement Program
- Teach for America
- Yale University

2008-2009 Visits

- Eastern Connecticut State University
- Southern Connecticut State University

Connecticut’s approval process conforms to standards developed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE). (See box next page.) This process requires two levels of review.

First, individual programs (elementary, early childhood, secondary math, secondary English, administration, etc.) must submit a “program report” that describes six to eight assessments and aggregate data to show how candidates demonstrate competency in three areas: (1) content knowledge; (2) professional and pedagogical knowledge, skills and dispositions; and (3) assessment of student learning. The program reports are evaluated by experienced educators, or program reviewers who have expertise in content

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EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM APPROVAL ▶ *continued from previous page*

The NCATE Conceptual Framework

Standard 1	Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions
Standard 2	Assessment System and Unit Evaluation
Standard 3	Field Experiences and Clinical Practice
Standard 4	Diversity
Standard 5	Faculty Qualifications, Performance and Development
Standard 6	Unit Governance and Resources

area standards, pedagogy and curriculum (see box). Each program review evaluation is then provided to the visiting team to consider the overall impact meeting the NCATE standards.

Second, visiting teams are appointed to conduct an on-site evaluation of the institution’s education programs. Visits range from four to five days of on-campus review of every aspect of the institution’s capacity to prepare candidates. Much like the high school accreditation visits

facilitated by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the program approval visits use data provided by the institution through written documentation, the program reports and stakeholder interviews to determine whether an institution and its programs meet each of the six NCATE standards, listed above.

Through the process of approving educator preparation programs, the CSDE and State Board of Education strive to ensure that Connecticut institutions prepare

WANTED

The State Department of Education seeks experienced educators to serve as program reviewers to evaluate individual teacher preparation programs.

Preferred Qualifications:

Eight to ten years experience in program improvement and curriculum development, supporting beginning teachers or student teachers. Participants selected must commit to a two-day training and evaluation of program reports.

Interested educators should contact Dr. Katie Moirs at katie.moirs@ct.gov or 860-713-6733.

high quality teachers, special service staff and administrators with the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to improve the education of all students. 📧

New Assessment Requirement for Early Childhood Education

Connecticut General Statutes require that all individuals seeking certification in Connecticut pass the appropriate State Board of Education approved subject area test. This requirement is aligned with federal law, which mandates that newly certified teachers demonstrate through a subject area test that they are well-prepared in their content area or field to be considered *highly qualified*.

On May 2, 2007, the State Board of Education approved a resolution to extend this requirement to new candidates for Connecticut educator certification in integrated early childhood education (#113). This endorsement authorizes

teaching nursery school through kindergarten in both special and general education settings, and in a general education setting only for Grades 1-3. Although Praxis II subject assessments are required in 26 other endorsement areas, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages oral and written proficiency tests are required for teachers of world languages, this requirement has not previously been imposed on early childhood education teachers.

As of January 1, 2008, those seeking certification as early childhood educators will have to pass two Praxis tests to be eligible: Praxis test #0022, Early Childhood:

Content Knowledge, and #0021, Education of Young Children. The State Board of Education adopted a minimum passing score of 156 for #0022, and 158 for #0021.

THE TEST ADOPTION PROCESS

Why these tests and these cut scores? To ensure equity and appropriateness, such decisions are based on a thorough review process. Before the early childhood education tests could be adopted, available tests for measuring the subject area content knowledge and pedagogy were identified, and a Test Review Panel was convened. This panel was a culturally and geographically diverse group of Connecticut early

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NEW ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ENDORSEMENT ▶ *continued from previous page*

childhood educators, and faculty from higher education programs preparing educators in the content area.

This panel reviewed four possible tests, draft Connecticut standards for early childhood educators and national data for each test. They recommended that together, tests #0021 and #0022 best balanced the combination of pedagogy and content knowledge, and the range of developmental levels of students taught by teachers certified in early childhood education.

A Standard Setting and Test Validation Panel was then convened to validate the tests for Connecticut use, and to

recommend cut scores. This group of Connecticut certified early childhood educators with three to ten years of experience, again chosen to be representative of Connecticut educators in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and geographic region, devoted two full days to study of the two recommended tests.

They examined the validity of the knowledge and skills measured by each test for the job of an entry-level teacher in Connecticut, and the job relevance of the content assessed in each question, considering the range of teaching assignments and variety of settings in which an early childhood teacher may

serve. Once the validity of the tests was established, each panel member received training and used established scientific methods to recommend a cut score. The Educational Testing Service, which develops and administers the Praxis tests, took the results of this panel's work and computed a recommended passing score.

By following this rigorous process based on the judgments of experienced Connecticut educators in the field, the State Department of Education hopes to ensure the tests adopted will truly assess whether a candidate possesses a sufficient level of knowledge and skill to perform effectively and responsibly in schools. 

Web-Based Certification System under Development

Since the 1980s the Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment has been tracking all requests for Connecticut certification, permits and authorizations on a WANG mainframe computer. (Does anyone remember them?)

As part of the Department of Education's efforts to provide a higher level of customer service and migrate off the legacy system, the Bureau is designing a new "Connecticut Educator Certification System" (CECS). This web-based system will allow candidates interested in Connecticut certification to apply online, check their application and certificate status, and communicate more effectively with the certification office staff.

Currently, the team is working on the website design, including educator profile, new user registration, credit card payment over the Internet and the importing of the existing information from the WANG



Meet the development team: (L to R) Chuck Hart, Cindy Gan, Tammi Harris, Dan Maloney, Kevin Graham

system. Every Connecticut educator will be assigned a unique identifier that will link all related information received and ensure information is updated accurately and efficiently.

State departments of education across the country must face many changes on the horizon, including new National Center for Education Statistics assignment codes, and Highly Qualified/Compliance reporting. Designing a system to meet future needs

is difficult, but the new system is designed with the required flexibility in mind. This flexibility in system design will offer users—educators, administrators and CSDE staff—access via the World Wide Web to the certification information they need.

Along with flexibility, confidentiality is another critical component. We are working closely with the Department of Information Technology to ensure that all confidential information is protected and accessible only by those who require such access.

Completion of the first phase of this project is expected at the end of 2007. Testing and fine tuning of the CECS will take us through the New Year with an anticipated deployment of the core functions of the system in the spring of 2008. We look forward to introducing you to the new capabilities of our web-based system soon! 

Connecticut Teacher of the Year: Christopher Poulos



Connecticut's Teacher of the Year for 2007, Christopher Poulos, understands first-hand the wealth of experience students gain from volunteering. A full-time Spanish teacher at Joel Barlow High School in Redding, Chris has a background in community development and volunteerism. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, focusing on leadership in community and volunteer organizations. After college, he joined the United States Peace Corps, serving for 27 months as a volunteer in Honduras, where he says the seed of his desire to teach was first sown.

After returning from Central America, Chris completed Connecticut's Alternate Route to Certification (ARC—see sidebar) and earned a Master of Arts in teaching Spanish at Teachers College, Columbia University. His master's research focused on foreign language teaching methodologies and immersion-based models for second language instruction. Chris has since founded a language-training program that centers on community service and cultural education. It is not surprising, then, that in his seven years of teaching, his contributions to Barlow High School have served as a catalyst for a shift toward immersion-based instruction that includes service learning. Chris designed a popular Spanish course for seniors, for example, that requires them to volunteer in hospitals, churches and after-school programs in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods.

DUTIES OF THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by the State Department of Education and ING, was established in 1952. The program begins with the selection of a teacher of the year

in each local district, and continues to the national level, where each state's Teacher of the Year is eligible for national honors.

The Connecticut Teacher of the Year and the finalists serve as teacher-ambassadors for public education. They are appointed to education advisory committees, present at many workshops and conferences, and become consultants to the Commissioner of Education. The Connecticut Teacher of the Year also represents the state at the national level, participating in national education forums and US Department of Education meetings.

Districts participating in the Teacher of the Year Program report that it positively affects the entire community. Recognizing outstanding teachers:

- establishes a culture that rewards excellence in teaching;
- validates the work of teachers;
- provides teachers with a platform to speak about educational issues;
- gives students, parents and communities a sense of pride in their teachers;
- showcases teachers as positive role models;
- encourages students to think about teaching as a career; and
- helps get the public involved and invested in schools.

Chris is the latest of a long line of distinguished Connecticut teachers to receive this recognition. One of more than 100 local teachers of the year submitted for consideration, he was selected because like those before him, he inspires a love for learning in his students, is loved and respected by parents, administration, faculty and staff, and serves as a leader in his field. Congratulations to Chris and to the Redding community! 🎉

For more information about the Teacher of the Year Program and current and past award winners, visit our website. [Click here](#) or go to www.ct.gov/sde/cert, and search for "SDE CT teacher of the year."

CONNECTICUT'S ALTERNATE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION

Contributed by Dr. LeRoy Hay, Director, Alternate Route to Certification, Connecticut Department of Higher Education

Connecticut's Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) program has prepared more than 3,500 teachers for Connecticut's schools since it began in 1988. Today, ARC prepares the largest number of new teachers in mathematics, all sciences and world languages in the state.

ARC-prepared teachers can be found in schools throughout Connecticut, and many have been honored as building and district teachers of the year. We are especially proud that Christopher Poulos, a 2000 ARC graduate, has been named the 2007 Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Christopher is living proof that the ARC program can and does prepare excellent teachers and is a successful partner with traditional teacher preparation programs in assuring that Connecticut will continue to have outstanding teachers in classrooms across the state.

For more information about the ARC program, go to www.ctdhe.org/arc or call 860-947-1300.

Advanced Alternate Route to Certification Approved

Many Connecticut districts struggle each year to fill the special education positions in their schools. In many of these same districts, excellent teachers seek new challenges, or struggle to find openings in elementary education or other fields in which they are certified. These teachers may consider additional training to become certified in special education, but earning the additional endorsement while working and

meeting family and other obligations can be daunting.

On February 7, 2007, the State Board of Education approved a new teacher preparation program specifically designed both to flexibly meet the needs of working educators and to be cost effective. The new Alternate Route to Certification Program leading to a cross endorsement in special education was developed by Capitol Region

Education Council (CREC). It is open only to educators with three years of experience who hold a valid Connecticut teaching certificate. The one-year program includes mentoring and field experiences in areas convenient to the participant's home or work. 

For more information, go to www.crec.org or contact Jan Waters at jwaters@crec.org or 860-509-3619.

Teacher Shortage Areas Identified for 2007–08

Each year, after an examination of district fall hiring reports, teacher shortage areas are identified for the next school year. This determination is important because it helps students determine which fields to study, helps veteran teachers determine whether to pursue additional endorsements, and helps institutions of higher education steer students toward fields that will have critical need in the coming years. In addition, the state provides incentives to help educators who serve in shortage areas. Such educators are eligible to benefit from several state programs.

The **Teachers' Mortgage Assistance** Program was established to assist educators purchasing a first-time home as a primary residence. Certified public school teachers who hold an endorsement and teach in

a shortage area (or priority district) are eligible for special low-interest mortgages through participating lenders. The program is administered by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority. *More information is available at www.chfa.org/FirstHome/firsthomeTeacherMortProgram.asp.*

In addition, **retired teachers who are reemployed** are not subject to earnings limits if they teach in a subject shortage area in the year in which they are reemployed. This reemployment may be for up to one full school year, and may be extended for an additional year with the approval of the Teacher's Retirement Board. *For more information, visit www.ct.gov/trb and click on frequently asked questions.*

In April of this year, 11 educator shortage areas were identified for the 2007–08 school year. They are:

- Bilingual Education
- Music
- Comprehensive Special Education
- Secondary Science
- Secondary English
- Speech and Language Pathology
- Intermediate Administration or Supervision
- Technology Education
- School Library Media Specialist
- Secondary World Languages
- Secondary Mathematics 

STATISTICS CORNER

ADMINISTRATIVE ENDORSEMENTS

	Female		Male		Total
Superintendent of Schools	215		367		582
Intermediate Administration and Supervision	4,281		2,837		7,118
Department Chairperson (Excluding CT Tech High Schools)	376		301		677
School Business Administrator	115		212		327
	4,987	57.3%	3,717	42.7%	8,704



Ask Nancy: When Should I Apply?

Dear Nancy,

I checked the certification website, and I think I may be eligible to advance my certificate to the next level. But it does not expire for another year. Should I apply now or should I wait?

Thanks,
Undecided in Windsor

Dear Undecided,

Why wait? Over the years I've heard all kinds of reasons. Some people think they get more for their money, but the truth is the fee is \$100 for initial, \$200 for provisional and \$300 for professional. It is the same \$600 dollars whether you zip through the levels as fast as possible or wait until the last possible moment. Others are afraid of the CEU requirement at the professional level if they are not working and earning CEUs in district professional

development; but holders of professional level certificates are not required to earn CEUs unless they are working under their professional level certificate.

In the end, it is a personal decision, but I encourage educators to apply as soon as they are eligible. Some districts award higher pay for advancing a certificate to a higher level. Why risk forgetting, or the possibility that revised regulations might change requirements? If you already hold the next level certificate, you are unlikely to be held to new requirements to attain that level. I suggest applying now, while you are thinking about it and while you are eligible.

Sincerely,
Nancy

If you have a general certification question you would like to *Ask Nancy*, please e-mail wendy.harwin@ct.gov.

TO ADVANCE MOST ACADEMIC TEACHING CERTIFICATES:

Initial to Provisional:

- 10 months of experience; and
- Successful completion of the BEST program, if available.

OR

- 30 months experience in an accredited nonpublic or out-of-state school.

Provisional to Professional:

- 30 months of experience under the CT provisional; and
- 30 semester hours of credit beyond the bachelor's degree.

Please check www.ct.gov/sde/cert for more information. E-mail questions about advancing your certificate to teacher.cert@ct.gov.

The Most Common Delay? No Personal Checks Accepted

Dear Nancy,

I am just completing a teacher preparation program, and hope to be certified in time to teach this fall. I saw on your website that summer is the busiest time of year for certification. I was wondering how to avoid common mistakes that delay certification.

Sincerely,
Curious in New Haven

Dear Curious,

By far the most common mistake applicants make is enclosing payment of certification fees in the form of a personal check. As

indicated at the top of the form, all fees must be paid by certified bank check or money order. When a personal check is received, the application is not accepted. The entire application is returned by mail.

Another common delay is caused when applicants do not include their Social Security numbers when registering for the Praxis exams. This prevents their scores from being uploaded correctly when reported electronically from the Educational Testing Service.

Please be assured that all certification analysts are working hard to process the thousands of applications each will receive

this summer as quickly as possible. We know that your livelihood depends on us, and we take that responsibility very seriously. Don't forget, you may start hunting for jobs while your application is in process. We wish all our Connecticut certification applicants the best of luck in finding the job for which they have worked so hard to prepare.

Sincerely,
Nancy

If you have a general certification question you would like to *Ask Nancy*, please e-mail wendy.harwin@ct.gov.

Student Learning Through Professional Development

A growing body of research indicates that the single most critical factor affecting student achievement is teacher quality. Connecticut recognizes that strong induction programs help improve instructional effectiveness and improve retention in the profession. Experienced mentor teachers and administrators play important roles by serving as instructional leaders and facilitators of the induction process at the school level.

For this reason, BEST Program professional development is designed to foster conversation between experienced and beginning teachers and administrators. It improves student learning by:

- supporting standards-based instruction;
- encouraging reflective practice;
- analyzing student work to inform instruction;
- developing teacher leaders;
- connecting teacher evaluation and professional development; and
- promoting and sustaining professional learning communities.

ADMINISTRATORS INCREASE THEIR IMPACT AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Besides beginning teacher seminars and support teacher training, BEST offers professional development specifically designed to help administrators become strong instructional leaders.

THE BEST ADMINISTRATOR INSTITUTE

This three-day workshop explores use of research-based strategies and resources by:

- using BEST program requirements and resources to support teacher growth and student learning;
- promoting reflective practice to build and sustain a professional learning community; and
- integrating student learning data into the teacher evaluation/professional development process.

Collaborative activities and interaction with colleagues from around the state make the Administrator Institute a lively and productive training, providing resources and strategies that can be put to use in districts immediately. Regional Administrator Institutes are held in the summer and winter. Districts may also request in-district trainings at any time by contacting the BEST Field Staff at their Regional Educational Service Center (see box at right). This workshop fulfills the requirement for administrators to receive 15 hours of training in supervision/evaluation.

NEW TEACHER INDUCTION: A PRINCIPAL'S ROLE

This three-hour training provides specific suggestions for applying the information and strategies in “An Administrator’s Guide to New Teacher Induction” to a

principal’s supervision and evaluation process. The guide can be accessed on the BEST Connections website at www.ctbest.org. Click on “Resources” and then “An Administrator’s Guide to New Teacher Induction.” 

To access professional development fliers at www.ctbest.org, select “Resources” then “Brochures for Workshops.” To register, select “Registration.” Choose a workshop title, and follow the directions to sign-in and register.

RESC FIELD STAFF

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STATISTICS CORNER

BEST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS 2006–07

177	Administrators attended the Administrator Institute
62	Principals attended a New Teacher Induction training
1,028	Mentors were trained
637	Teachers attended BEST Portfolio Support Training
3,937	Beginning teachers and mentors attended BEST seminars
183	Mentors attended the Mentor Seminar Series (supplemental training for mentors)

Frequently Asked Questions on CEUs

DO I NEED CEUS?

Certification regulations require the completion of 9.0 (90 contact hours) continuing education units (CEUs) every five-year period that a professional educator certificate holder is employed (full-time or part-time) in a Connecticut public school serving under a professional educator certificate. If you are not serving under a professional educator certificate in a Connecticut public school, you are not required to complete CEUs in order to apply for continuation of a professional educator certificate. (See box.)

DO I NEED CEUS IN READING AND/OR TECHNOLOGY?

Specific CEU requirements are driven by the endorsement that a professional educator certificate holder is serving under at the time of application for continuation. Specific CEU requirements are listed on our website. [Click here](#), or go to www.ct.gov/sde/cert and scroll down to “professional

development.” Educators serving under an endorsement that does not appear on the chart may complete any 9.0 CEUs.

CEU EQUIVALENTS

The US Department of Education (USDE) offers professional development in the form of e-learning opportunities that several states, including Connecticut, have approved for district CEU coordinators to grant CEU equivalents. In Connecticut, public school districts may grant CEU equivalents for learning experiences that directly contribute to teacher competence and student learning. The professional development activities offered through the USDE may be used independently by teachers or in a faculty or team setting. 

For more information, go to: www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html.

For CEU related questions, contact *Patty Wilson, state CEU coordinator, at*

patricia.m.wilson@ct.gov. You may also reach her on the dedicated CEU line at 860-713-6772, or by fax at 860-713-7017.

WHO MUST EARN CEUS?

CEUs Required

- Holders of professional level certificates currently serving in a contracted position in a Connecticut public school requiring an endorsement on that certificate

CEUs NOT Required

- Substitute teachers
- Tutors
- Retired teachers
- Holders of initial or provisional certificates
- Educators not currently working under their certificates in a Connecticut public school

NCLB Highly Qualified Provisions

Under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, all teachers serving as primary instructors in core academic subjects must be “highly qualified” (HQ) by June 30, 2007. According to the HQ provisions of the law, districts cannot hire teachers who have not demonstrated that they are highly qualified under the federal definition in each of the core content areas they will teach (see limited exceptions under “Continued Use” below). Districts may, however, accept official documentation of HQ status from a previous Connecticut district.

As of July 1, 2007, the US Department of Education (USDE) will strictly limit the

use of the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) Plan for making new HQ determinations.

CONTINUED USE OF HOUSSE TO DETERMINE HQ STATUS

Two continued uses of HOUSSE will remain acceptable under NCLB:

1. Special educators new to the profession and serving as primary instructors of core academic content to one or more student, who are HQ in one of the three identified core content areas (English/language arts, science, or mathematics), may continue to use HOUSSE for two years to become HQ in the other content areas they teach; and

2. Teachers of multiple subjects such as elementary or middle grade teachers in rural school districts (32 Connecticut districts are designated rural by the federal government) who are HQ in one or more core content areas may use HOUSSE over a two-year period to become HQ in the other content areas.

In addition, the USDE has eased back from its position on full discontinuation of use of HOUSSE, approving Connecticut’s three proposed continued uses of HOUSSE for veteran teachers.

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NCLB HIGHLY QUALIFIED PROVISIONS ▶ *continued from previous page*

Connecticut districts may continue to use HOUSSE for veteran teachers who:

1. Return to the profession after extended leave due to maternity/family rearing, long-term illness, etc.
2. Return to the classroom from an administrative position.

3. Transfer into a new content area for which they already hold an active, separate endorsement.

It is the intent of the federal government, however, to eliminate use of HOUSSE plans entirely through the reauthorization

of NCLB, due to be considered in this congressional year. 📄

Questions about NCLB and HQ status may be submitted to Nancy Pugliese, bureau chief, at teacher.cert@ct.gov.

How to: Complete a Statement of Professional Experience

Valuable time is lost when districts do not complete an ED 126 Statement of Professional Experience correctly. Avoid delay and extra work by remembering the following:

The Superintendent's Office **MUST** Complete The Grid Below. (Applicants do **NOT** complete sections below this line.) **6**

Position Held (e.g., teacher, administrator, social worker, etc.)	Subject/Field <i>For middle/secondary teachers, indicate each subject taught.</i>	Grade Level	Certification Endorsement Required for Position	Check Below if:		Dates of Service	
				Full-Time (50% or more)	Part-Time (less than 50%)	From (Month/Year)	To (Month/Year)
Teacher	History	7	026	✓		8/30/01	Present
Teacher	English	8-9	015		✓	9/6/05	6/18/06
Adult Education	If the applicant served as an adult education teacher, indicate the number of hours served per school year.		# of hours/yr.	# of hours/yr.	# of hours/yr.		
School Psychologist	If the applicant completed a school psychologist internship (not under contract), please check here. <input type="checkbox"/>						

Superintendent Attestation: Please check the appropriate box, sign and complete the school information below.

- 4** The applicant named has served successfully in the above position(s) in our public or approved nonpublic schools.

5

- 1** List only the endorsement the educator served under on the grid.
- 2** If the educator served under more than one endorsement, list each on a separate line with the exact dates of service for each endorsement, and the percentage of time spent on each.
- 3** Include the subject taught for educators in bilingual departmentalized classrooms.
- 4** Do not forget to indicate by checking one of the boxes under the grid whether the service was successful.
- 5** Include original signature and title. Only the superintendent is authorized to sign the form unless a letter authorizing another person is on file in Certification.
- 6** Applicants should not fill in the grid. This information must come from the superintendent's office.

Coaching Reminders

Connecticut regulations require that “a coach (regardless of coaching assignment) of intramural or interscholastic athletics in elementary, middle or high schools,” shall hold either a five year coaching permit, or a temporary emergency coaching permit. This includes volunteers.

ANYONE providing any form of skills instruction must hold either a temporary

or a five-year coaching permit from the State Department of Education.

To facilitate processing of applications, please remember the following:

- Applications must be submitted with original signatures; faxed or photocopied applications will not be processed.
- First aid and CPR cards must be signed prior to photocopying.

- Applications for temporary emergency coaching permits must include copies of first aid and CPR cards from courses completed within one year of application.
- When such documentation is required, official transcripts, CEU certificates, or original certificates of completion must be submitted. Faxes or photocopies cannot be accepted. 

Email questions to teacher.cert@ct.gov.

ARC Graduates: Advancing 90-Day Certificates

Please remember that since 90-day certificates are held for such a short time, educators cannot apply to advance to an initial level certificate more than two weeks before completion of the 90 days. Applications received more than 14 days

from expiration of the certificate will be returned to the applicant, and must be updated before they can be resubmitted. The employing agent verification and attestation on the required ED 172A application form should not be signed

and dated more than two weeks before expiration of the 90-day certificate. 

Certification applications are available for downloading and printing at www.ct.gov/sde/certapps.

Avoiding a Holdup: Praxis I Waivers

Educators who meet eligibility criteria can waive the Praxis I test by submitting an ED 192 Application for Connecticut Academic Skills Assessment Waiver. Such educators should submit page one of this application and send it to Certification at the address at the top of the form. Be sure to do this before requesting scores from the College Board or American College Testing Program. The rest of the form includes information

about how to submit SAT or ACT scores to document eligibility.

Applicants requesting scores from the College Board should be sure to use recipient code 3132 to have the scores reported to the Connecticut State Department of Education. If not, scores are sent only to the applicant, causing delay and frustration. Similarly, the

recipient code for submitting ACT scores is 0625. 

Questions about Praxis I waivers may be e-mailed to teacher.cert@ct.gov. Certification applications are available for downloading and printing at www.ct.gov/sde/certapps.

DID YOU KNOW?

PRIMARY LANGUAGE NOT ENGLISH: PRAXIS ACCOMMODATIONS

Do you know an educator for whom passing Praxis tests is especially challenging because English is not his or her first language? Extended testing time may be available for test-takers whose primary language is not English (PLNE). Test-takers who meet requirements of the Educational Testing Service are allowed 50 percent additional testing time.

For more information, [click here](#) or go to www.ets.org/praxis and search for PLNE.

Questions and Answers: Protect Your Retirement

What is required to join the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement System (CTRS)?

To become a member of CTRS you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- You are employed in a position in a Connecticut public school that requires certification issued by the State Department of Education.
- You are employed for at least an average of half a school day per week.

Your membership in the Teachers' Retirement System will begin the month in which you start working provided it is on the first working day of the month.

If I meet all of these eligibility requirements, is membership optional?

No. If you meet all eligibility requirements, participation in the Teachers' Retirement System is mandatory.

I am employed as a school business administrator in a position that requires a school business administrator certificate (endorsement code #085). Am I eligible to join CTRS?

No. Although certification is required for this position, it is not eligible for membership in CTRS.

If I am employed as a member of the professional staff with the State Board of Education or with one of the State of Connecticut's public universities or colleges, may I join CTRS?

Yes. You have the option to enroll in the Teachers' Retirement System, the State Employees' Retirement System or an alternate retirement program. Members of the professional staff at state facilities are exempt from the requirement to hold Connecticut certification.

I started teaching in September 1998 but my certification became effective on December 15, 1998. Can I receive credit for the time I was not certified?

No. Membership credit cannot be granted for the time period prior to your certification. For CTRS purposes, your membership in the system will begin in December 1998, the month in which your certification became effective.

I held certification in another state before I came to Connecticut. Is it still necessary for me to apply for a Connecticut teaching certificate?

Yes. Although you were certified in another state, you must apply for a Connecticut teaching certificate. You may obtain the Certification for Out-of-State Applicants Fact Sheet (#106) at www.ct.gov/sde/cert by clicking on Fact Sheets.

While I was teaching, my certification lapsed for 6 months. How will this affect my eligibility and credit in CTRS?

Since you were not certified for this period, you were not eligible for membership or credited service. Any contributions that were made during this period would be refunded to you and service for this period of time would be canceled.

My principal has asked me to teach in an area for which I am not certified. Will this affect my CTRS eligibility?

Unless the State Department of Education grants you temporary authorization under certification regulations to perform this assignment, your eligibility to participate in CTRS may be affected depending on how many classes you teach outside of your area of certification. If you teach more than 50 percent of the time in an area outside of your certification, you will not be eligible for CTRS membership or any retirement credit.

Last year I taught full time (100 percent F.T.E.) but two classes (40 percent F.T.E.) were in an area for which I did not have the proper certification. How will this affect my CTRS membership?

Since you were teaching 60 percent of the time in an area for which you were certified, your CTRS membership will reflect you being a 60 F.T.E. teacher for this period of service.

Whom should I contact if I have additional questions regarding Connecticut Teachers' Retirement?

CT TEACHERS' RETIREMENT BOARD
21 GRAND STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1500

Toll-Free 800-504-1102 or 860-241-8400
Fax 860-525-6018
www.ct.gov/trb

District 2006–07 Compliance Reports under Review

To help districts ensure all educational staff members are appropriately certified, authorized or permitted, as required by Connecticut Education Laws, the State Department of Education collects compliance information annually. Compliance reports due February 23, 2007 are currently under review. As each district's report is reviewed, the district will be notified of compliance status by e-mail. Once all compliance issues have been resolved, districts will receive a letter recognizing the district's full compliance with Connecticut General Statutes.

District use of unlisted teaching assignments (#990) and unlisted non-

teaching assignments (#995) is monitored. Any NEW use of these codes must be preapproved by the Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment. To expedite this approval process, new fields have been added to the staff file to record unlisted assignment titles and job descriptions.

Thank you for your continued cooperation. This process assures equity and maintains the high level of quality teaching in Connecticut. It also helps districts avoid inadvertent errors that might affect valued staff members later in their lives by reducing the teaching time recognized by the Teachers' Retirement Board. 

For questions on compliance, please contact Helen Jabs at helen.jabs@ct.gov.

"No teacher, supervisor, administrator, special service staff member or school superintendent shall be employed in any of the schools of any local or regional board of education unless such person possesses an appropriate state certificate, nor shall any person be entitled to any salary unless such person can produce such certificate dated previous to the first day of employment..."

Connecticut General Statutes section 10-145(a)

NEW

Compliance Resource Coming Soon

The certification bureau has created a new resource for those who complete the Certified Staff File (ED 163). The ED 163 is a file used by school district human resource offices to report all staff in a

position requiring certification. The State Department of Education Assignment/Endorsement Resource, a Microsoft Access application, will be made available on the ED 163 beginning August 2007. This

resource includes assignment codes, titles and descriptions, as well as the matching endorsement(s). It is our hope that this resource will help simplify the process of reporting certified staff. 

Myth Busters: Important Compliance Reminders

LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTES

Substitutes serving more than 40 days in the same assignment must be listed on the certified staff file, and must either hold a long-term substitute authorization or a valid certificate in the content area for which they are serving as a long-term substitute.

regulations do not allow educators to teach even one class outside the endorsements listed on their certificates. Doing so violates Connecticut General Statutes and carries potentially serious retirement consequences (see Teachers' Retirement System, Page 12).

setting, or down to fourth-grade in the case of secondary world language endorsements.

TEACHING OUTSIDE SUBJECT AREA ENDORSEMENTS

A minor assignment permit or other authorization is required to teach outside the subject area(s) listed on a certificate. Connecticut statutes and certification

Note that early childhood, elementary and middle grade endorsements authorize teaching only the grade levels listed on the certificate. Secondary endorsements authorize teaching the specific subjects down to fifth-grade in a departmentalized

VTE ENDORSEMENTS

Vocational endorsements (see list below) authorize teaching in the Connecticut Technical High School System only. Educators cannot teach in public

#090: Occupational subjects in VT schools
#108: Practical Nurse Education
#109: Health occupations in VT schools

continued over ►

MYTHBUSTERS: IMPORTANT COMPLIANCE REMINDERS ► *continued from previous page*

school districts or state-approved special education facilities under these endorsements. Rather, the trade and industrial occupations endorsement #098 and request of district are required to teach such subjects in the comprehensive high school. Please note that #098 authorizes teaching at the high school level only, not middle school.

OUT-OF-STATE STUDENT TEACHERS

Teachers enrolled in out-of-state preparation programs cannot do student teaching in Connecticut without prior approval from Connecticut's Department

of Higher Education (DHE). Bureau Chief Nancy L. Pugliese recently expressed concern about an increase in the number of teacher candidates inappropriately student teaching in the state. "The state needs high quality educators," she stated. "We do not like to turn them away, but if educators do not complete an approved student teaching placement, it becomes very difficult to certify them. Student teaching in Connecticut by individuals attending out-of-state institutions without appropriate authorization from the DHE cannot be accepted; therefore, a stand-off is created whereby the out-of-state institution

considers them a program completer, but we cannot accept them."

Districts must be sure they know the name of the institution where the candidate is completing the actual teacher preparation program, not just the supervising institution. If the teacher preparation program is located out-of-state, the candidate must show evidence of a DHE waiver or DHE approval of the institution prior to student teaching. 📄

For more information go to www.ctdhe.org or call DHE at 860-947-1800.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Do You Screen Your Volunteers?

Do you require criminal background checks before permitting parent chaperones, or other school volunteers to have contact with students? If not, you could put children, as well as your district, at risk.

At a time when schools are eager to increase parent and community involvement, many hesitate to throw up obstacles to participation. Fingerprinting can be daunting and expensive. The very thought of the procedure (irrespective of an individual's prior conviction status) may dissuade some from stepping forward. And there is also the question of who pays. However, the potential harm to children and the legal, moral and financial liability that could attach to the district are powerful arguments on the other side for better volunteer screening.

The Volunteers for Children Act, an amendment to the 1993 National Child

Protection Act, was signed into law on October 9, 1998. The law allows qualified organizations dealing with children, elderly and the disabled to use national fingerprint-based criminal history checks to screen out volunteers and employees with relevant criminal records. Qualified organizations include organizations that provide care, treatment, education, training, instruction, supervision or recreation for children, the elderly or individuals with disability—whether public, private, for-profit, not-for-profit or voluntary.

Under the terms of the amendment, if a volunteer sexually molests a child in his/her care, for example, and it can be shown that the volunteer had been previously convicted of a relevant crime, the school district may be held liable.

Many districts already require criminal background checks for volunteers. Other

districts merely check prospective volunteers against the State Sex Offender Registry and inquire as to whether applicants have been convicted of crimes. And even fingerprinting does not tell the whole story. Many incidents go unreported. Districts should check references and conduct the same types of careful background checks on all those—paid or volunteer—who work with children.

Don't wait for an unfortunate incident. Consult with legal counsel and proactively determine which approach is most appropriate for your district, and best protects the well-being of the children in your care. 📄

Please submit suggestions for future articles on professional practice issues. To submit your ideas, or for questions about professional practices, contact Pat Scully, Investigator, at pat.scully@ct.gov.

Where to Go for More Information

NEW Connecticut State Department of Education Web Addresses

The state recently changed its web address.

All old links now bring users to the main State Department of Education web page.

Here is how to find what you need:

State Department of Education home page:
www.ct.gov/sde

Certification main page:
www.ct.gov/sde/cert

How to become a teacher in Connecticut:
www.ctcert.org

Applications may be obtained at:
www.ct.gov/sde/certapps

Information on educator assessment:
www.ct.gov/sde/certtests

BEST Program web page:
www.ctbest.org

CEU requirements chart:
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2613&q=321394

CERTALERT ARCHIVES

Looking for something you read in a previous edition of CertAlert? Want to browse issues you missed? You can find all past issues in the archives at www.ct.gov/sde/cert under "publications."

Connecticut Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs)

Connecticut's six RESCs are public education agencies created under state statute "to furnish programs and services" to public school districts. For information about fingerprinting, professional development and other teacher resources:

Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES), Hamden
www.aces.k12.ct.us

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), Hartford
www.crec.org

Cooperative Education Services (CES), Trumbull
www.ces.k12.ct.us

EASTCONN, Hampton
www.eastconn.org

Education Connection, Litchfield
www.educationconnection.org

LEARN, Old Lyme
www.learn.k12.ct.us

For Veterans

The New England Troops to Teachers program helps those eligible transition from the military to a teaching career:
www.nnettt.org

Information about additional services available to Connecticut military families

may be obtained at www.ct.gov/msp/site/default.asp, or by calling 866-251-2913.

For Paraprofessionals

Connecticut requirements for teacher aides or assistants:

www.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/circ/circ02-03/c-15.pdf

Parapro standardized test registration and preparation information:
www.ets.org/parapro

Financial Aid for Teachers

Federal student loan cancellation information for teachers:

<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/teachercancel.jsp?tab=repaying>

Connecticut PTA Christa McAuliffe Scholarships for students entering the teaching profession:

www.ctpta.org/programs/scholarship.html

Connecticut Education Foundation scholarships for minority students and Connecticut Education Association members' children:

www.cea.org/about/cef/index.cfm

Minority teacher Incentive Grant and Weisman Scholarship Programs:

www.ctdhe.org/sfa/pdfs/MTIP%20Brochure%20and%20Form.pdf

Alma Exley Scholarship Program for students in accredited teacher preparation programs:

www.almaexleyscholarship.org



CERTALERT

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BUREAU OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION, CERTIFICATION, SUPPORT AND ASSESSMENT
Connecticut State Department of Education
P.O. Box 150471, Room 243, Hartford, CT 06115-0471

860-713-6969 • Fax: 860-713-7017
E-mail: teacher.cert@ct.gov
<http://www.ct.gov/sde/cert>



SPECIAL RESOURCE

FOR DISTRIBUTION TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN CLASSROOMS ASSIGNED A STUDENT TEACHER

STUDENT TEACHING BENEFITS STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

By ELIZABETH OSGA, Superintendent, Griswold Public Schools

Your child comes home from school and announces, "I'm getting a student teacher." You stop in your tracks. Is it a good thing to entrust your child's education to a student teacher? The answer requires an understanding of the readiness of student teachers to teach and the supervision they receive.

Teacher preparation standards in Connecticut are among the highest in the nation. Student teachers must be in a state or university program approved by the state of Connecticut. Before their student teaching assignments, they earn a substantial number of credits in their subject matter, as well as in curriculum, methodology and child/adolescent development. The preparation also includes observations, practice lessons and other field work. It is only when these prerequisites are completed that aspirants are placed in assignments.

Student teaching placements are not haphazard. Connecticut requires student teachers be placed with Beginning Educator Support Team certified teachers. The BEST credential is awarded to veteran teachers who have been approved by their boards of education and who have undergone specialized training. Even after their initial training, BEST teachers have access to advanced seminars and training, as well as connection to a district level BEST program facilitator.

A student teacher begins an assignment by observing and consulting with the BEST teacher. The BEST teacher gradually allows the student teacher to assume lesson delivery and other teaching duties. The goal is to have the student teacher assume the full teaching role sometime after the midpoint of a 12-week (or so) assignment. The BEST teacher remains responsible for learning in the classroom and makes interventions as necessary.

Given the preparation and supervision of student teachers, there are few who do not succeed in their placements.

Even with the risk managed, you might wonder if there are any benefits for your child. Yes, directly in the classroom, and for the greater school and district community. The BEST credential assures you your child's teacher has pedagogical skills that have been refreshed by specialized training. The placement of a student teacher heightens the consciousness of BEST teachers as they model and reflect on exemplary instructional practices. The presence of a second person in the room also allows for additional attention to individual and small group needs. The partnership has great potential for students.

Beyond the classroom, student teachers hold great promise for the school and district. Record teacher retirements are scheduled in the next five to 10 years, so lucky are the districts who are able to recruit from their own cadre of student teachers. There are few more powerful assurances of success than having seen a candidate in action in your own school with your own curriculum.

So if your child arrives home with an announcement of a student teacher, relax and respond, "Great opportunity!"

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