

Series 2008-2009
Circular Letter: C-5

TO: Superintendents of Schools
Executive Directors, Regional Educational Service Centers
Directors, Magnet and Charter Schools

FROM: Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education

DATE: November 26, 2008

SUBJECT: Visiting International Teacher Permit (VITP) Process

Effective July 1, 2007, pursuant to Section 10-145k of the 2008 Supplement to the Connecticut General Statutes, the state legislature approved the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) request to issue a Visiting International Teacher Permit (VITP) to visiting foreign teachers serving in Connecticut public schools under J-1 visas. The passage of this legislation standardizes the requirements and process for visiting international teachers thereby ensuring that the teachers meet minimum requirements.

The requirements for issuance of the VITP are very specific. The following provides the criteria under which the VITP will be issued:

(a) The State Board of Education shall, upon the request of a local or regional board of education, issue an international teacher permit in a subject shortage area pursuant to section 10-8b of the general statutes, provided the conditions for issuance of such permit pursuant to the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section are met. Such permits shall be issued for one year and may be renewed for a period of up to one year, upon the request of the local or regional board of education, provided the permit shall not be renewed more than twice in the two years subsequent to the initial issuance.

(b) The local or regional board of education requesting the issuance of an international teacher permit shall attest to the existence of a plan for the supervision of the teacher.

(c) The teacher shall:

(1) Hold a J-1 visa issued by the United States Department of State;

(2) Be in the United States to teach (A) in accordance with a memorandum of understanding between Connecticut and the country from which the teacher is entering, or (B) as part of the Exchange Visitor Program administered by the United States Department of State Teacher Exchange Branch (Fulbright is an example of such a program);

(3) (A) Hold the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, from a regionally accredited institution of higher education, as determined by a foreign credentialing agency recognized by the Commissioner of Education, with a major in or closely related to the certification endorsement area in which the teacher is to teach, or (B) hold such a degree without such a major and have successfully completed the teacher assessment for the appropriate subject area, as approved by the State Board of Education;

(4) Have completed, in the country from which the teacher is entering, the equivalent of a regionally accredited teacher preparation program; and

(5) Have achieved the level of oral proficiency in English as determined by an examination approved by the Commissioner of Education.

At this time, this requirement is satisfied by completion of the ACTFL-OPI in English. A minimum score of “intermediate high” is required. World language teachers only may be issued a substitute authorization for one year prior to completion of the ACTFL-OPI English. Teachers of core academic content must pass the ACTFL-OPI English before the first VITP will be issued.

For visiting international teachers teaching world language only, the world language consultant for the CSDE will screen for English oral proficiency during the interview process. If the teacher is selected for a position in Connecticut as a visiting international teacher and is unable to complete the ACTFL-OPI English prior to beginning the position in a Connecticut public school, the employing district may request issuance of a substitute teacher authorization. Under the substitute teacher authorization, the visiting teacher is not considered highly qualified. Issuance of the substitute teacher authorization will allow the visiting international teacher to serve for one year only. The district should encourage the teacher to complete the test as soon as possible. Once this requirement has been met, the district may request issuance of the VITP. If the individual does not achieve a passing score on the ACTFL-OPI in English (intermediate high) prior to the expiration date of the substitute authorization, they will not be eligible for issuance of the VITP and will not be permitted to return the following year. Any service completed under the substitute authorization will count toward the three years of service allowable under the J-1 visa.

Visiting international teachers teaching a core academic subject must meet the English OPI requirement before the first permit can be issued. The substitute authorization is not an option for visiting international teachers teaching core content areas other than world language.

For issuance of a VITP, the application process will require submission of the following materials by the date indicated:

- Between June 30 and July 30: Letter from district requesting issuance of the permit, identifying the name of the teacher, country of origin, position, dates of employment, and attesting to the existence of a special plan of supervision and support for the visiting teacher;
- No later than August 15: ED 170 general application form (**NO FEE**) should be completed by the visiting teacher. Across the top of the application the district should

write: **VISTING INTERNATIONAL TEACHER PERMIT- DISTRICT NAME - NO FEE REQUIRED.**

- Copy of the ACTFL-OPI English certificate (minimum score intermediate high). This should be submitted with the application form.

Districts which employ visiting international teachers for world language positions, who were initially requested and were issued a substitute authorization, should submit the application for the VITP as soon as the testing requirement has been met.

Visiting international teachers participating in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Connecticut must have all educational credentials on file with Mary Ann Hansen, World Language Consultant for the State Department of Education. Fulbright teachers must include an official letter from the United States Department of State Fulbright Program identifying their status in the program.

When completing the ED 170, if the visiting teacher does not yet have a social security number (SSN), our office will assign a tracking number until such time as an SSN is obtained. Likewise, if the individual does not yet have a personal mailing address, the district should use the district central office address and the permit will be mailed to the district office. Once the visiting teacher obtains a SSN and personal mailing address, the district should provide the updated information to our office.

The VITP will not be issued at any specific level (initial, provisional or professional), similar to the DSAP. It will be issued for one school year (effective August 1 of the school year to be employed through June 30 of the school year to be employed). The country of origin, and the sponsoring district will be write-ins on the permit. The permit will only be valid for service in the named district.

If the district wishes to retain the visiting teacher for an additional year, up to a maximum of three years as allowable by the J-1 visa, the district must file a request for renewal of the VITP. To simplify the renewal process, the teacher will not need to complete another application form. The employing district should submit a letter to the bureau requesting reissuance of the permit. The letter should attest to the successful service of the teacher(s) and list the name(s) of the teacher(s) for whom the permit(s) should be reissued. This letter should be mailed to the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification to the attention of Helen Jabs, Education Consultant. It is the district's responsibility to communicate with the teachers prior to requesting reissuance of the permit to verify their desire to return and the district's desire to retain them.

Districts should make every effort to submit requests for VITP as early as possible to ensure appropriate certification for the entire school year. We request that renewal requests be submitted by July 1 of each year.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please feel free to contact Helen Jabs at helen.jabs@ct.gov.

NLP:npj