




STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Series: 2003-2004  
Circular Letter: C-3

TO: Superintendents of Schools  
FROM: Theodore S. Sergi   
DATE: August 19, 2003  
SUBJECT: Updated Certification Issues

Customer Service

As you are aware, the state's fiscal situation has created major changes in virtually all of the state agencies. In the Bureau of Educator Preparation and Certification, fewer full-time positions have resulted in some changes to the services we are able to provide to the public.

This past spring we established the hours for superintendent phone inquiries to be from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, Monday through Friday. If you have questions about certification of employees/applicants, please do not hesitate to contact us at (860) 713-6770 during those hours and we will do our best to answer your questions and concerns.

Also, we are committed to serving the public with convenient walk-in hours that remain unchanged at Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Activities are limited to picking up applications and publications and dropping off applications; no consultation or advice will be available on a walk-in basis.

For assistance in completing the application process, currently applicants may either: call (860) 713-6969 between the hours of 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday or submit a written request via email to the [www.teacher.cert@po.state.ct.us](mailto:www.teacher.cert@po.state.ct.us). Emails are generally responded to within 5-7 business days. Applications and other critical information may be downloaded and printed from the website at <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index.htm>.

Reporting of School Employees to the Department: Reminder of Statutory Obligations

In recent months, there has been a series of incidents involving suspected child abuse and/or neglect by an educator. These incidents have been publicly reported in news articles, but have not been reported to the State Department of Education as required by Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101(c). This section requires that the person in charge of a public or private school, public or private institution or facility that provides care for such child, send a copy of the written report of suspected child abuse and/or neglect to

the Commissioner of Education when the mandated reporter is a staff member and the report concerns suspected abuse or neglect by a school employee holding a certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Board of Education. Therefore, anytime a report of suspected child abuse and/or neglect is filed with DCF concerning a school employee holding a certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Board of Education, you are mandated to submit a written report of the allegation(s) to the Commissioner of Education.

The Bureau of Educator Preparation and Certification is currently preparing a memo to be distributed in the next couple of months which will provide you with a more detailed explanation of the statutes specifically related to the reporting of school employees holding a certificate, authorization or permit issued by the State Board of Education.

### **New Forms and Appropriate Use of Forms**

The bureau has recently updated all forms used in certifying, authorizing or permitting individuals to teach or work within schools. The changes were made to reflect consistent language within professional practice policies across states; provide consistency in format; and provide clarification of instructions on all application forms. Once printed for distribution, these new forms will be placed on the website for downloading.

It is also important to remind you that the "Superintendent's Request for Priority Application Review Form" is to be *used for a finalist's application only*, not for the review of applications from all candidates being considered. For an efficient priority review, this request form should accompany the candidate's complete application packet. We are committed to assisting districts in making the best hiring decisions available to them. However, when this form is used improperly, it slows the review of all files, including the priority review files. Therefore, please be cautious when using this form and only submit it when a hiring decision will be based upon whether a person will receive their certification in time to begin the teaching year.

The department is also currently considering the distribution of a CD-ROM, on which all certification application forms would be available, to every principal for placement in the school library. Therefore, if certified employees do not have access to the Internet, forms would be available to them without having to contact the department to have one sent. We would appreciate feedback from districts as to whether a CD-ROM, including all certification forms, would be helpful. Any feedback can be forwarded to the department via the email address identified below.

### **Kindergarten Added to Elementary and Special Education Endorsements**

As you are aware, Public Act 03-168 was passed by the legislature and amends CGS Section 10-145d to authorize all holders of the elementary education certificate, #005 - Grades 1 through 6, to teach kindergarten as of July 1, 2003. In late July 2003, all educators who hold the #005 certificate in elementary education were sent a new certificate identifying kindergarten as part of their endorsement. Additionally, all

individuals who hold the #004 - Grades 1 through 8 endorsement will be offered the option of relinquishing their #004 for the new #013 endorsement that allows teaching from kindergarten through grade 6.

The same legislation authorized the teaching of kindergarten for all holders of the comprehensive special educator certificate, #265 - Grades 1 through 12, as of July 1, 2003. All educators who hold #265 certificates in comprehensive special education were also sent a new certificate identifying the kindergarten authorization.

The third issue addressed by the statutory change was the repeal of the certification regulations that were to have become effective July 1, 2003. Subsequent to July 1<sup>st</sup>, we certified applicants in accordance with the regulations in effect from August 6, 1998 through June 30, 2003, with the above-mentioned modifications. We are providing you with several copies of these regulations along with information about the areas of change. We hope that this will be helpful to you and your district administrators.

We hope that this information clarifies and updates you about newly implemented changes within the Bureau. If you have questions or concerns about the contents of this letter, please contact Nancy L. Pugliese, Acting Chief, in writing at Bureau of Educator Preparation and Certification, P.O. Box 150471, Hartford, CT 06115-0471, or via email at [nancy.pugliese@po.state.ct.us](mailto:nancy.pugliese@po.state.ct.us).

TSS:np