



CERTALERT

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

NCLB Highly Qualified Provisions Progress

Last fall, *CertAlert* reported on the new High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) Plan. What progress has Connecticut made this past year in implementing not just HOUSSE, but all the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) provisions of the federal law? Here is what's been happening.

FEDERAL MONITORING RESULTS

In January 2006, Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) staff met with US Department of Education (USDE) officials for a monitoring visit on teacher quality and Title IIA provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The official report received from the USDE following this visit cited several areas of concern including:

- The HOUSSE Plan process;
- Categorizing those with Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs) as highly qualified; and
- The integrated history/social studies endorsement and its required Praxis II exam.

The CSDE responded to each concern, and on June 16, 2006, a final letter was received from the USDE accepting Connecticut's HOUSSE process and confirming correction of all areas of concern.

Statewide 2005–06 HQT Statistics

	Core Academic Classes Taught	% Classes Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	% Inexperienced FTEs***
State	128,318	96.8	16.6
High Poverty Schools*	26,787	93.4	43.1
High Minority Schools**	27,509	93.1	46.2
Low Poverty Schools*	35,168	98.1	16.0
Low Minority Schools**	32,923	97.9	18.0

* Based on percent of students eligible for free/reduced price meals.

** Based on percent of minority students.

*** The US Department of Education defines inexperienced as anyone with up to two years of teaching experience.

HQT DATA

Connecticut must annually report district HQT data to the federal government. Connecticut's Consolidated State Performance Report was based on full-time equivalents, rather than on number of classes taught. The USDE concluded, from assessment of this data, that Connecticut was one of many states that had not demonstrated a reasonable expectation of meeting the 100% HQT goal by the end of the 2005-06 school year. All

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FALL 2006

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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. This year has been a busy one for certification in Connecticut. We have been diligently reviewing the state's educator continuum, and reviewing all certification regulations for revision. However, we do not expect revisions to be implemented before 2012.

In addition, we have been working hard to implement the highly qualified teacher requirements in the federal No Child Left Behind Act. After a monitoring visit in January, federal officials requested additional changes to Connecticut standards. You can read about these changes in the cover article, and in the article on changes to DSAP Eligibility Requirements.

We hope you enjoy this issue. We have instituted several new features in response to your feedback. In this issue, you will find a new Opinion section, new certification statistics "corners" that we hope you will find interesting, and a Special Resource on maintaining Connecticut certification. This is a one-page tool designed to be printed and distributed to educators during exit interviews. With looming teacher shortages in mind, we hope that it will help those leaving the field due to retirement, a family move or child rearing to maintain their certificates, so that they can more easily return to teaching in Connecticut in the future.

Thank you for your feedback. We hope you will continue to send ideas for future articles and new features that you would find useful in your work. We need your help to make this newsletter as practical and helpful as it can be. Please consider



submitting an opinion article (see page 5). What do you want to say to us and to your hiring and higher education colleagues across the state? We look forward to hearing from you.

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

NCLB Highly Qualified Provisions Progress ► *continued from previous page*

states were required to file revised plans by July 7, 2006.

Connecticut's revisions included new HQT data based on number of classes taught. This report revealed that 97% of Connecticut districts have completed the HOUSSSE process for veteran teachers. However, the data also revealed some disturbing comparisons. For example, 4.7% more classes in high poverty schools were taught by teachers that do not meet the federal definition of highly qualified. Even more striking, 80% of Connecticut's inexperienced educators teach in our largest urban districts. The State Department of Education is committed to addressing such differentials. Poor or minority students must not be taught by inexperienced, under-qualified, or out-of-field teachers at a higher rate than are other students. Plans

for additional mentoring and other kinds of support and incentives to keep more veteran teachers in urban districts are included in the revised state plan.

To assist districts with planning and improvements, central offices may now access HQT statistics on our website. Staff file contacts have access to the secure log-on. Password access allows each district to view only its own data. Beginning with the 2006–07 data, HQT data will be provided annually to the district in late January. This data will be based on annual reports on HQT status the districts are required to submit to the CSDE each fall.

CONTINUED USE OF HOUSSSE TO DETERMINE HQT

Although the federal government is encouraging states to discontinue use of

HOUSSSE, two continued uses are accepted under NCLB:

1. Special educators new to the profession who are HQT in one of the three identified core content areas (English/language arts, science, or mathematics), may continue to use HOUSSSE 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 HQT in one or more core content areas may use HOUSSSE over a two-year period to become HQ in the other content areas.

In addition, the USDE recently pulled back somewhat from its position on full

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NCLB Highly Qualified Provisions Progress ▶ *continued from previous page*

discontinuation of use of HOUSSSE. In its revised state plan, Connecticut proposed three additional uses of HOUSSSE for veteran teachers. It remains to be seen if the USDE will accept these without modification.

Connecticut plans to continue to use HOUSSSE for veteran teachers who:

1. Return to the profession after extended leave for family reasons, illness, etc.;
2. Return to the classroom from an administrative position; and
3. Transfer into a new content area for which they hold an active certificate.

NEXT STEPS

All districts must submit a district plan by November 15 addressing how 100% HQT

status will be achieved by June 30, 2007. The SDE will analyze the reports, and districts that have achieved less than 96% HQT will get written feedback on their plans. If the district does not show subsequent progress, technical assistance and other intervention by the CSDE will be offered.

Bureau Chief Nancy Pugliese is pleased with the progress the state has made in implementing the highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB. She points out that “Connecticut has always been committed to ensuring that highly qualified teachers staff our classrooms.” She sees NCLB’s highly qualified teacher requirements as “reinforcing the rigorous standards that Connecticut established two decades ago.”

WANTED

CSDE is seeking experienced educators to serve on Visiting Teams to evaluate and approve Connecticut Educator Preparation Programs.

Preferred Qualifications:

- 5 years of experience as a teacher or administrator in Connecticut
- Service on a NEASC accreditation team
- Service as a BEST Program Mentor, Cooperating Teacher, CCI Assessor or Portfolio Scorer
- Experience in performance assessment

Participation Commitment:

- Participation in a 2-3 day summer 2007 Visiting Team Training
- Serve on a 3-4 day visit to a Connecticut higher education institution in 2007-08 or 2008-09

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

CERTIFICATION NEWS

Teacher Shortage Areas

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, assists veteran teachers determine whether to pursue additional endorsements, and aids 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

Ten educator shortage areas were identified for the 2006-07 school year.

Bilingual Education	Remedial Reading/Remedial Language Arts
Comprehensive Special Education	Secondary Science
Secondary English	Speech and Language Pathology
Intermediate Administration or Supervision	TESOL
Secondary Mathematics	Secondary World Languages

shortage area 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.

Connecticut Teacher of the Year



The Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education and ING, was first 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.


Districts participating in the Teacher of the Year Program report that it impacts positively on the entire community. Recognizing outstanding teachers: a) establishes a culture

that rewards excellence in teaching; b) validates the work of teachers; c) provides teachers with a platform to speak about educational issues; d) gives students a sense of pride in their teachers; e) showcases teachers as positive role models; f) encourages students to think about teaching as a career; g) gives the community a sense of pride in its teachers; and h) helps get the public involved and invested in schools.

The **2006 Connecticut Teacher of the Year** is **Mary Kay Rendock**, a fifth grade teacher at Carmen Arace Intermediate School in Bloomfield. Mary Kay, who has taught in Bloomfield for over 20 years, believes that it is crucial to teach children life lessons, such as generosity and empathy, as well as teaching the academic curriculum. Service

learning (community service) plays an important role in her classroom.

Mary Kay is the latest in a long line of distinguished teachers to receive this recognition. One of over 100 local teachers of the year submitted for consideration this year, she was selected because like the others before her, she inspires a love for learning in her students, is loved and respected by parents, administration, faculty and staff, and has been a consistent leader in her field. Congratulations to Mary Kay and to the Bloomfield community!

For more information about the Teacher of the Year Program and current and past award winners, please visit our website at www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/TOY/indexToY.html. 

DSAP Eligibility Requirement Changes

A monitoring visit by representatives from the United States Department of Education in January of this year has necessitated a change in policy regarding eligibility for a Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP). The Department received clarification of certain NCLB requirements regarding highly qualified teachers. DSAP holders employed by Connecticut boards of education must be "highly qualified" when hired. To ensure this, effective July 1, 2006, all first time applicants for a DSAP must meet the following updated requirements:

- hold a bachelor's degree from an approved institution;
- fulfill the Praxis I requirement (either by passing the test or obtaining a waiver);
- complete at least 12 semester hours of credit in the subject for which a permit will be issued;
- present evidence of enrollment


(admission) in a Connecticut teacher preparation program leading to certification (not applicable for candidates seeking a cross endorsement in areas not requiring a planned program); and

- **(NEW)** meet the Praxis II or ACTFL (for world languages) requirement prior to the issuance of the DSAP. If there is no Praxis II or ACTFL requirement for an endorsement area, this requirement is not applicable. As with other endorsements, applicants for a DSAP in special education must complete the Praxis II for special education. In addition, applicants who will serve as the primary instructor may be required to complete additional Praxis II tests in a core content area in order to meet the federal definition of highly qualified in at least one of the core content areas they are to teach (English/language arts, science, or mathematics).

This new policy will not apply to any candidate who was issued a DSAP prior to July 1, 2006, and seeks a reissuance.

In addition please note the following:

- Current DSAP holders who have not met the Praxis II or ACTFL requirements are strongly encouraged to register and take the examination as soon as possible.
- Applicants may NOT enroll in out-of-state teacher preparation programs.
- DSAP holders must complete a minimum of nine semester hours of coursework credit in their planned program to be eligible for a reissuance of the DSAP.

If you have questions concerning DSAPs, please contact Paul Briganti at paul.briganti@ct.gov. 

Giving Back to the Profession *Contributed by Jill B. Mack*

I vividly recall my student teaching experiences in 1974. The first was in a first grade class in a small Vermont city. My cooperating teacher was stern, unlike the friendly teacher I had in the first grade, but she assured me that once classroom routines were established, she would smile and laugh more. She cautioned me not to be too friendly to start, lest I lose control. “You can always relax after the first week, but not the other way around,” she advised.

Ms. Stevens (a pseudonym) was a respected mid-career teacher, and ahead of her time. Unsatisfied with results in reading, she used data to guide practice, finding alternatives to basal readers, implementing

new approaches, and assessing outcomes. If a strategy didn’t work, she searched for a new one. I learned much from her and those bright-eyed six year olds in nine weeks.

When we said good-bye, I was surprised when she thanked me for helping her become a better teacher. It never occurred to me that I might have taught her anything. After all, she was a veteran. I was a novice. But she explained that I helped her get organized and develop a system for filing those infamous dittos. My multitude of questions had helped her reflect on her practices.

My second experience was quite different. The 6th grade reading teacher in this rural

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION?

Do you feel strongly about an educator certification, preparation or support issue? Do you have something to say to your fellow superintendents, hiring administrators and/or certification officers at Connecticut colleges and universities? Make this newsletter your forum. Please send us short articles of no more than 500 words for possible inclusion in this space in the next issue of *CertAlert*. You may email them to wendy.harwin@ct.gov. Thank you for your contributions.

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STUDENT TEACHING COORDINATORS OF CONNECTICUT APPROVED EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Please consider supporting student teachers in your schools by contacting any of the Student Teaching Coordinators listed below. If you are a principal or superintendent, please encourage the experienced teachers in your schools to become cooperating teachers. For questions about training for cooperating teachers, contact Georgette Nembr, Connecticut State Department of Education, at georgette.nembr@ct.gov.

Albertus Magnus College 203-773-8087	Dr. Joan Venditto jvenditto@albertus.edu	SCSU 203-392-5907	Mrs. Kathy Mauro maurok1@southernct.edu
Alternate Route to Certification 860-947-1300	Ms. Maria Davoodi mdavoodi@ctdhe.org	St. Joseph College 860-231-5327	Mr. Jeff Bongard jbongard@sjc.edu
CCSU 860-832-2144	Ms. Holly Hollander hollanderh@ccsu.edu	University of Bridgeport 203-576-4170	Dr. Lori Noto lorinoto@bridgeport.edu
Connecticut College 860-439-2762	Dr. Mike James mejames@conncoll.edu	University of Connecticut 860-486-0212	Ms. Kathy Smith (undgrad) catherine.smith@uconn.edu
ECSU 860-465-0111	Ms. Mary-Grace Shifrin shifrinm@easternct.edu	University of Connecticut 860-486-1903	Mr. Michael Alfano (grad) michael.alfano@uconn.edu
Fairfield University 203-254-4000 ext. 2201	Mr. Tony Costa acosta@mail.fairfield.edu	University of Hartford 860-768-4773	Dr. Claudia Nunn nunn@hartford.edu
Mitchell College 860-701-5449	Ms. Elaine Gore gore_e@mitchell.edu	University of New Haven 203-932-7042	Ms. Susanne Murphy smurphy@newhaven.edu
Quinnipiac University 203-582-8435	Dr. John Leary john.leary@quinnipiac.edu	WCSU 203-837-8518	Dr. Jan Volpe volpej@wcsu.edu
Sacred Heart University 203-371-7802	Dr. Karl Lorenz lorenzk@sacredheart.edu	Yale University 203-764-8308	Ms. Marilyn Szwed marilyn.szwed@yale.edu
Sacred Heart University 203-365-7636	Dr. Lois Libby (grad) libbyl@sacredheart.edu		

GIVING BACK TO THE PROFESSION ▶ *continued from previous page*

school had a master's degree in reading and language arts, but had never taught in a self-contained classroom. Ms. Austin (also a pseudonym) lacked classroom management skills, and appeared close to tears when things got out of control. I drove back to campus, confident my college supervisor would find me another placement. Instead he quoted his favorite line from a song he often played in his education courses: "I never promised you a rose garden." He sent me back to do the job the past four years had prepared me to do.


It was not easy to start over in November, but I persevered, establishing a code of conduct and implementing it fairly and consistently.

The teacher watched quietly from the sidelines. I needed her expertise in reading comprehension, fluency, and decoding, and sought her help selecting books and developing lessons. In the end, we learned from each other. And that is what student teaching is about. It is a two-way street.

This brings me to my point. Besides the shortage of certified teachers in some areas, Connecticut now faces a critical shortage of BEST-trained, cooperating teachers willing to mentor student teachers from the 17 Connecticut institutions with approved programs. Student teaching directors sometimes contact a dozen or more districts before securing one

placement. Please consider the valuable contribution you can make to teacher candidates entering our noble profession by hosting them in your schools.

I promise you the learning will be a two-way street.

About the author: Jill Mack has served as the Certification Officer at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford since 2000. Prior to returning to hometown roots in Manchester, Jill served as consultant to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators and the Professional Standards and Licensing Division of the Vermont Department of Education. She also served as adjunct professor at Castleton State College in Vermont, teaching the field experience component of Foundations of Education. Her 15 years of classroom teaching experience spanned Grades 1, 3 and 5. 

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Applicant Screening: Protecting Connecticut Students

"Teacher accused of molesting students gets nine-month prison term." "Coach sex scandal sparks new legislation." "School district sued in teacher/student sex case."

These newspaper headlines from recent teacher/coach misconduct cases are frightening. More frightening, however, is that in many instances, the damage to students, disruption to instruction, and costs to boards of education might have been avoided had a thorough background screening been completed. Despite tightening budgets and a shrinking pool of qualified applicants, thorough employment screening is critical. Those who have experienced the ordeal of a headline-grabbing professional practice incident know only too well the full cost of cutting corners.

The vast majority of educators do not have criminal records, have not been dismissed for cause, nor had action taken against their certificates. Rather, they are caring professionals dedicated to the welfare and education of Connecticut students. But the vast majority is not all. Comprehensive screening may alert you to one of those few who could severely harm the health, safety and welfare of your school community.

Criminal History Records Check

- State law mandates that local school districts require each person hired submit to a state and national criminal history records check within 30 days of employment – *CGS §10-221d(a)(2)*. It is essential that district procedures ensure compliance with this law.
- Waiting until the last minute to comply

with the above law means an educator who failed to disclose a conviction might already have been in a school for months prior to receipt of the criminal history results. Expediting fingerprinting may avoid trouble.

Note: The Department of Public Safety provides expedited service, making the results of criminal history records checks available over the Internet. This service requires a contract to obtain expedited results for an additional fee.

- State statute also requires districts to ask applicants whether they have ever been convicted of a crime or whether criminal charges are pending at the time of application – *CGS §10-221d(a)(1)*. A written statement should be required on the application.

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APPLICANT SCREENING: PROTECTING CONNECTICUT STUDENTS ▶ *continued from previous page*
Other Forms of Background Check

The criminal history records check is just one screening tool. Districts must carefully review numerous other aspects of an applicant's background. Connecticut statute requires that "Prior to hiring any person, a local or regional board of education shall make a documented good faith effort to contact previous employers of the person in order to obtain information and recommendation which may be relevant to the person's fitness for employment." *CGS §10-222c*. The key to fulfilling this statute is a documented good faith effort. Written records of reference checks (oral and written) must be maintained, and a good faith effort, defined as a serious attempt to establish fitness for employment in a professional position with children, must be made. Some ideas that may assist districts follow.

Disclosures

Disclosures made at the time of application are often an effective screening tool. Districts may want to discuss with an attorney additional means to elicit problems that do not necessarily lead to criminal conviction. Consider:

1. Including additional questions on the application, in addition to the routine "Have you ever been convicted of a crime?" (See box for examples.)
2. Requiring a signed attestation. For example, "This application and accompanying documents contain no material misrepresentations, falsifications or omissions. All information provided is true, complete and accurate." The application should state that any material misrepresentation, falsification or omission may result in rejection of the application or contract termination.

SAMPLE DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS

- a) Are you now the subject (in Connecticut or any other jurisdiction) of an investigation related to possible employment termination or revocation, suspension or annulment of a certificate, license, permit or other credential (including, but not limited to an education credential)?
- b) Have you ever surrendered a professional certificate, license, permit or other credential (including, but not limited to, an education credential); had one revoked, suspended, annulled, invalidated, rejected or denied for cause, or been the subject of any other adverse or disciplinary credential action in any state, territory or foreign country?
- c) Have you ever been dismissed for cause from any position?

3. Requiring applicants to list all professional experience, including teaching, administrative, and special service. Candidates are often disinclined to list experience in districts or schools where they have had negative experiences, unless pressed.

Red Flags and Clues

Routine document, reference and records checks may disclose important clues for evaluating applicants. The strategies listed below may enhance the screening process:

1. Gather information on red flags such as unexplained gaps in the chronology of employment or educational history; teaching assignments interrupted mid

year; or a succession of positions held for only one or two years.

2. Check all references. A personal phone call often yields results not available in writing. Investigate any absence of positive, personal letters of recommendation. Carefully consider references from peers or others in the absence of recommendations from administrators with authority to speak on behalf of a school or district.
3. Be alert to delay or failure to complete, sign and submit all paperwork. Any attempt to submit a resume and/or letter of application in lieu of the standard application form should be rejected.
4. Watch for fraudulent documents. Letters of recommendation should be on letterhead, dated, and include an original signature. Only official academic transcripts that bear the institutional seal should be accepted. Be aware of ink color and writing style throughout each document, and investigate inconsistencies.
5. Be extra attentive with candidates who apply in a shortage area just before the opening of school. Applicants with something to hide may hope to escape detection by applying at the last minute, when it is more difficult to complete a thorough screening.

The certification bureau is developing a professional practice page for its website. What strategies work well in your district or school? Help make the online version of this article the most helpful tool it can be. For more information or to contribute ideas, please contact Pat Scully at (860) 807-2146 or at pat.scully@ct.gov. 📧

The BEST Program: Promoting Teacher Leadership

While the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program is designed to support and assess beginning teachers, its impact on the experienced teachers who support them is also significant. Tapping the experiences of trained mentors and scorers in the fall of 2005, the BEST Program introduced the **BEST Elementary Teacher Leadership Academy (ETLA)**, which brought together a cohort of 30 exemplary elementary and elementary special educators to become part of a state-wide professional learning community. Academy participation spans a two year-period, during which time participants explore the many dimensions of teacher leadership. During year one, participants conduct a classroom-based action research project in an area of student learning which interests them and benefits their school. In year two, participants develop a leadership project at the school- or district-level.

The ETLA kick off in the fall of 2005 included a two-day workshop for participant teachers, their principals and their superintendents. Nancy Pugliese, Chief of the Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment, confirmed the Department's

“Teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved instructional practice.”


—Marilyn Katzenmeyer
and Gayle Moller

commitment to helping teachers lead from the classroom. Dr. Tony Rigazio-DiGuilio from Central Connecticut State University led stimulating discussions around teacher leadership and action research. He was joined by panelists that included superintendents and experienced teacher leaders who discussed ways districts can harness teacher-classroom research to improve education.

Year-one participation, which included the exploration of literacy, numeracy, science

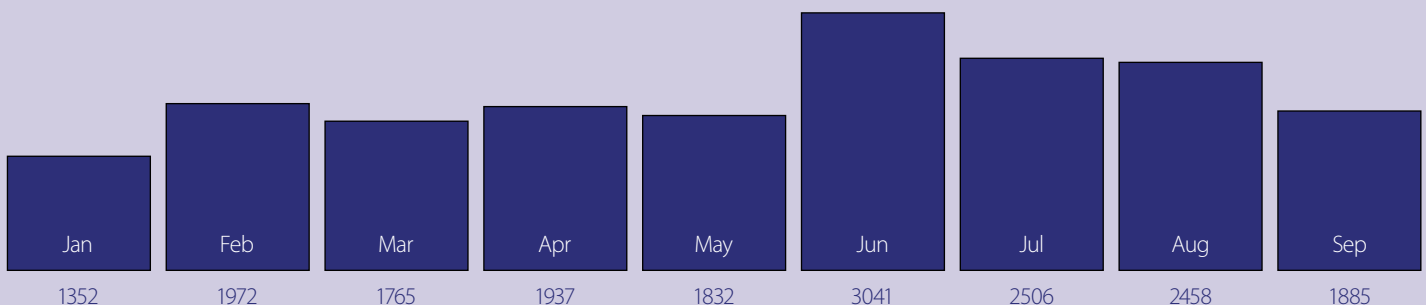
and differentiated instruction, culminated in a one-day workshop in May at which projects and results were shared. Additional information on the ETLA can be obtained from Chris Sullivan, BEST Elementary Project Leader, at christine.sullivan@ct.gov, or Sharon Fuller, BEST Special Education Project Leader, at sharon.fuller@ct.gov.

Topics investigated through Teacher Inquiry Projects include:

- connections between writing and understanding in children's learning
- working with reader response in students with ED
- the power of partner reading
- interventions to improve comprehension
- literacy in social studies learning
- science in Kindergarten
- writing and science knowledge
- problem solving
- use of assessments to identify effective strategies in using manipulatives and grouping
- fluency
- phonemic awareness
- vocabulary development 

STATISTICS CORNER

BUREAU CERTIFICATES/PERMITS ISSUED 2006



This year, 80% of applications received were processed by the 12 certification consultants in four weeks or less. During the summer, 80% were processed within six weeks!


Early Childhood Education Endorsements

Several districts have voiced confusion recently over what early childhood endorsements #112 and #113 authorize educators to teach. Although both endorsements are integrated special education/regular education endorsements, neither authorizes educators to serve in a special education classroom above the kindergarten level.

The #112 endorsement authorizes teaching children from birth through kindergarten,

in a regular education, special education or an integrated setting. The more common #113 endorsement authorizes special education and/or regular education only at the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels. Teachers holding this endorsement may teach Grades 1–3 in a regular education setting only.

Allowing educators to serve in an inappropriate setting not only does a disservice to Connecticut children, who all

deserve properly prepared teachers, but it also renders the district out of compliance with Connecticut statutes and certification regulations, and endangers educators' status with the Teachers' Retirement Board. If you have any questions about early childhood endorsements or compliance in general, please contact Kathleen Wedge at kathleen.wedge@ct.gov. 


Professional Development Forms Required for ARC Graduates

The Alternate Route to Certification (ARC) provides a certification option for applicants who have already earned a bachelor's degree and have completed the required content area coursework for Connecticut certification in certain academic subject areas. ARC provides the professional education coursework in a challenging, condensed, non-credit-bearing format, followed by two years of supervised teaching in a Connecticut public school or approved private special education facility.

ARC graduates must successfully find a position and serve under a temporary 90-

day certificate before they can receive an initial educator certificate, but this is not the end of special certification requirements designed to ensure ARC graduates get the support they need to successfully make the transition to teaching. ARC graduates are not eligible for a provisional level certificate until they complete at least two years of successful service under their initial educator certificates—even if they successfully complete the BEST program. In addition, ARC graduates must submit a special form, signed by the superintendent, documenting completion of at least 30 hours of professional development in

order to be eligible for the provisional level certificate.

Please be certain that ARC graduates teaching in your districts get the special support they may need to become teachers of excellence. And do not forget to remind them to include the professional development form in their applications for a provisional certificate. This form is available on our website at www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/certform/vpd_arc.pdf. 

Student Teaching/DSAP Placement

Imagine you have just completed a rigorous graduate program for teacher certification. You are excited to start in a new teaching position in the fall. Suddenly you find that you are not done with school after all and must re-enroll for another year to complete the student teaching requirement you thought was behind you. Several Connecticut educators this year found themselves in this uncomfortable position.

Certification regulations and statutes require teachers to complete student teaching in the field and at the level of the endorsement they are seeking. Student teaching may be waived if the student has prior subject and grade-level appropriate experience in an approved nonpublic school, or if the student completes 10 months of successful experience under a Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP)

in the specified content area.

A number of educators ran into conflicts with these regulations this year when it was learned that their student teaching, or their DSAP service, was under the wrong endorsement. For example, if a student is enrolled in an approved program for biology, he or she may NOT teach anything

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STUDENT TEACHING/DSAP PLACEMENT ▶ *continued from previous page*

but biology either for student teaching or under a DSAP. If a district would like to place the student in a general science position, the applicant must complete a program for general science including the Praxis II exam for general science before he or she may be recommended for

certification. Similarly student teachers enrolled in physical education programs are NOT authorized to teach health even for one period, whether or not they have completed the coursework and the Praxis II exam for the additional endorsement.

Please be certain that student teachers and holders of DSAPs are placed in appropriate teaching positions. If there are any questions about a particular candidate, they may be addressed to teacher.cert@ct.gov. 📧

Paying Certification Fees

Please remind educators in your schools, districts, and higher education institutions that whether they are applying for certification for the first time, adding an

endorsement or renewing or advancing their Connecticut educator certificates, all certification fees must be paid in the form of a certified bank check or money order.

Applications that are received with personal checks are not accepted. Rather, they are returned to the applicants by mail, causing delay in the certification process. 📧

Substitute Authorizations

All substitute teachers not certified in the subject they are teaching must be properly authorized by the Connecticut State Department of Education if they serve more than 40 days in the same assignment during any school year.

Please submit an ED 175 Application for Extension of Substitute Teacher Authorization beyond the 40-Day Limit as soon as you know that a substitute without the appropriate certification is going to serve in a position for more than 40 days. This application must include the candidate's official transcripts and a letter describing the steps taken to fill the position with an appropriately certified educator and the circumstances surrounding the need to place a non-certified substitute in the long-term position.

These steps and circumstances must be documented with copies of vacancy postings and newspaper ads. Candidates that completed their degree or course work outside the United States also

LONG-TERM SUB REQUIREMENTS

Connecticut regulations require that long-term substitutes:

- hold a bachelor's degree; and
- have completed 12 semester hours of credit in the area or subject of the substitute assignment.

must submit an official evaluation of their foreign credentials completed by a state-approved evaluating agency in lieu of official transcripts. The list of state-approved agencies may be found on Fact Sheet #112 at www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/facts01/factsde2.htm. All applications may be printed from www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/toccert.htm.

The effective date of the substitute authorization is normally the date that the application was received in the certification office. The expiration date is always June 30 of the school year in which the application was submitted. The regulations offer long-

term substitute authorization to districts as a last alternative when no certified candidate is available. This authorization is not meant to be issued for the same candidate for the same classroom for more than one year.

If you have any questions about a long-term substitute authorization, you may contact Arlene Morrissey at arlene.morrissey@ct.gov. 📧

2005-06 Compliance Report

At the end of the 2005-06 compliance year (August 31, 2006), a total of 44 districts reported 126 educators still serving in positions without appropriate certification. Aside from being out of compliance with Connecticut law, these educators are not eligible to contribute to the teachers' retirement system until appropriately certified.

All uses of unlisted teaching assignments (#990) on the staff file have been reviewed, and affected districts were notified. Review of all uses of the unlisted non-teaching assignment code (#995) is underway. Any NEW uses of the unlisted teaching and non-teaching assignment codes must be pre-approved by the Bureau of Educator Preparation, Certification, Support and Assessment. To expedite this process, a new section has been added to the staff file to record unlisted assignment titles and job descriptions.

A new year has now begun. The 2006-2007 compliance reports will be compiled in December and mailed to districts in January 2007. The goal is to help districts ensure their educational staff is appropriately qualified and certified, as required by law.

Thank you in advance for your continued cooperation. The compliance process assures equity and maintains the high level of quality teaching in Connecticut. It also serves as an important check to

help districts avoid inadvertent errors that might impact valued staff members later in their lives by reducing the teaching time recognized by the Teachers' Retirement Board. For questions on certification or compliance issues, please contact Kathleen Wedge at (860) 713-6969 or at kathleen.wedge@ct.gov. Questions regarding the staff file (ED 163) should be directed to Barbara Canzonetti at (860) 713-6818 or barbara.canzonetti@ct.gov.

MYTH BUSTERS: IMPORTANT COMPLIANCE REMINDERS

Early Childhood

- The integrated early childhood endorsement #113 is an integrated regular education/special education endorsement for PK-K ONLY. This endorsement authorizes service in both regular and special education classrooms at the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels. However, in Grades 1–3, it authorizes service in regular education classrooms ONLY.

Elementary and Middle Grades

- Elementary and middle grades certificates authorize service only at the grade levels listed on the certificate (elementary = K-6 only; middle grades = 4-8 only). Educators must hold a cross endorsement or obtain authorization such as a minor assignment (applicable to middle or secondary content areas

“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)

only) to serve any amount of time out of the listed grade range.

Secondary

- Although secondary certificates list only Grades 7–12, educators holding secondary endorsements are currently authorized to teach in their content area down to Grade 5 in a departmentalized setting (down to Grade 4 for world language endorsements).

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 area in which they are serving as a long-term substitute. ☒

STATISTICS CORNER

NUMBER OF CERTIFIED TEACHERS LIVING IN TOP 10 MOST POPULAR DISTRICTS FOR EDUCATORS

1	West Hartford	2233	6	Milford	1622
2	Stamford	1809	7	Norwalk	1506
3	Hamden	1735	8	New Haven	1464
4	Waterbury	1703	9	Manchester	1426
5	Fairfield	1629	10	Trumbull	1421

Accreditation 101

The proliferation of alternate and online education is seen as a boon by busy educators trying to fit professional development into tightly packed schedules. But some find, after much time and money spent, that their hard work has not paid off in terms of certification requirements. In order to advance a certificate to the professional level or earn an additional endorsement, educators may be required to complete additional coursework. In order to meet any certification requirements, credit must be awarded on the official transcript of a **regionally accredited** college or university. What does this mean, and how can you help educators determine if a college or university is appropriately accredited? Here are some tips.

There are six major accrediting bodies in the United States, one in each region of the country (see box). These private agencies have developed criteria for evaluating post-secondary institutions to ensure they meet basic quality standards. To count toward certification in Connecticut, all required credit must be awarded from institutions accredited by one of these six agencies. Information about a school's accreditation status is usually found in the school catalog. But be sure the accrediting body is one of the six main regional agencies. Accreditation by any of the many national and/or state level accrediting bodies accepted by the US Department of Education is NOT sufficient.

US REGIONAL ACCREDITING AGENCIES

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, PR, US Virgin Islands
www.msche.org

New England Association of Schools and Colleges
CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT
www.neasc.org

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
AZ, AR, CO, IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, NM, ND, OH, OK, SD, WV, WI, WY
www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org


Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
AK, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA
www.nwccu.org

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, TX, VA
www.sacs.org

Western Association of Schools and Colleges
CA, HI, Guam, Samoa, Palau, Micronesia, Mariana and Marshall Islands
www.wascweb.org

Several online resources can help you determine the status of a school. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) maintains a searchable database of institutions accessible to the public at www.chea.org/search. Entering the name of a school delivers a list of all bodies accrediting the institution. You must then check that list to be sure the appropriate regional agency is listed. College Source Online maintains a similar online database at www.collegesource.org. Once you have located the institution, click on the profile icon. This database includes a separate

category for regional accreditation, making it easy to determine if the school holds appropriate accreditation.

Of course, if any question remains about the appropriateness of coursework to advance a certificate or earn an additional endorsement, please contact us at teacher.cert@ct.gov. 

STATISTICS CORNER

TOP TEN 2005–2006 DSAPS

1	Mathematics, Grades 7–12	152	6	Biology, Grades 7–12	37
2	Comprehensive Special Education, Grades K–12	133	7	Intermediate Administrator and Supervisor	30
3	English, Grades 7–12	63	8	Department Chairperson	27
4	General Science, Grades 7–12	54	9	Chemistry, Grades 7–12	25
5	Spanish, Grades 7–12	49	10	Mathematics, Middle Grades	21

Where to Go for More Information

Connecticut State Department of Education

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

Certification main page:
www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index.htm

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

Applications may be obtained at:
www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/toccert.htm

More information on Assessment:

Connecticut State Department of Education
Information on assessment requirements for educator certification in Connecticut:
www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/tocassess.htm

Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program

Information about requirements and professional development opportunities:
www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/t-a

American College Testing (ACT)

Obtaining historical scores on the ACT test:
www.act.org/aap/scores/online2.html

College Board

Obtaining Historical SAT Scores:
www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/scores/sending/old.html

Educational Testing Service (ETS)

Praxis
Test dates, locations, registration and preparation information for the Praxis I and II tests, including links to free test preparation materials and full practice exams and preparation guides for a fee:
www.ets.org/praxis

Parapro

Information for school paraprofessionals about parapro test dates, registration, locations and test preparation:
www.ets.org/parapro

School Leadership Series

Information about the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) for administrative applicants:
www.ets.org/sls


American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

Provides information about the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Written Proficiency Test (WPT) required instead of Praxis II for world language teachers in Connecticut:
www.languagetesting.com

TEACH IN CONNECTICUT

The Department of Higher Education's Education and Employment Information Center has developed a helpful booklet on becoming an educator in Connecticut. *Teach in Connecticut* includes information about tuition free certification preparation programs, financial aid for teachers, shortage areas, and much more. You may access it at www.ctdhe.org.

TRAINING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION FOR PRINCIPALS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATORS

This professional development program on the administration of special education is designed to assist educational leaders ensure quality programming for all students, including students with disabilities. The training includes seven sessions over the course of a school year, combining interactive seminars with job-embedded reflection to assist with the application of information to educational practice. The program is appropriate for superintendents, principals, assistant principals, central office administrators, and administrators-in-training. Full participation and completion of all work is accepted by the State Department of Education as fulfillment of the 36 clock hour special education requirement for administrative certification. More information may be obtained from SERC at www.ctserc.org/leadership/ (click on the training link at the top of the page) or at (860) 632-1485. 



CERTALERT

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

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
Email: teacher.cert@ct.gov
<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/index.htm>



SPECIAL RESOURCE

A ONE-PAGE TOOL DESIGNED TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO EDUCATORS AT EXIT INTERVIEWS

MAINTAINING CONNECTICUT EDUCATOR CERTIFICATES

Whether you are retiring, moving out of state or taking a leave from your teaching career, it is a good idea to maintain your Connecticut certification. It is much easier to maintain, than it is to reestablish once a certificate lapses. After a lapse, you may be subject to new testing or coursework requirements, or lose an endorsement altogether if it becomes obsolete. If you are unsure of which form to use, you may submit an ED 170 application and a fee of \$50 (certified bank check or money order only) prior to the expiration date on a certificate (up to six months prior).

By submitting an application prior to expiration, the certification is considered in process, pending materials and final evaluation. As long as the application includes the original signature of the applicant and the minimum fee in the form of a certified bank check or money order, the application is considered timely and additional signatures, supporting documents and final fee may be submitted later. All application forms are available from our website at www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/toccert.htm. Please allow 10–12 business days for mail to reach our office.

IF YOU HAVE AN INITIAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE

Applicants who have not served under a three-year initial educator certificate that is about to expire should submit an ED 183 Application for Renewal (pages 1 and 2 only) and a certified bank check or money order for \$100 to renew their certificate. Initial educator certificates may be renewed up to five times before educators are required to meet current coursework and testing requirements.

Educators who served for a portion of the three-year certificate, but are not eligible to advance to the provisional level, should also have page three of the ED 183 completed and signed by the superintendent.

Applicants who may be eligible to advance their initial level certificate should submit an ED 170 General Application and

a \$50 fee (certified bank check or money order only). Other forms or documentation will be requested for full evaluation. Eligibility, level of certification (initial or provisional) and final fee are determined upon completion of a full evaluation.

IF YOU HAVE A PROVISIONAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE

Submit an ED 170 General Application and minimum fee of \$50 (certified bank check or money order only). Official transcripts, additional forms or other documentation may be requested for full evaluation. Eligibility, level of certification and final fee are determined upon completion of full evaluation.

CONTINUATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE

The CEU requirement to maintain this certificate is based on the time served for a Connecticut board of education under the particular certificate. Educators not serving under the professional educator certificate are NOT required to earn CEUs to maintain the certificate. There is no fee to continue a professional educator certificate. Simply submit an ED 179 Application for Continuation. Save your original certificates documenting completion of any CEUs in case your application is audited.

PLEASE NOTE

Certification regulations change periodically. The above is based on current regulations. It is your professional responsibility to stay informed about current certification requirements. Be sure to update your mailing address with us, so that you receive any information sent. You may check current regulations on our website at www.state.ct.us/sde. Questions about maintaining your certificate may be submitted by email at teacher.cert@ct.gov, or by fax at (860) 713-7017. General questions about current requirements may be answered by phone at (860) 713-6969, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, between 12 and 4 pm. ☎



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