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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D. *[Signature]*
DATE: January 24, 2012
SUBJECT: Presentation of the Final Report of the Reconfiguration of the Current Certification Structure and Summary of PSTEB Deliberations

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to present an overview of the Final Report of the Reconfiguration of the Current Certification Structure and a summary of the deliberations of the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) regarding those recommendations.

BACKGROUND:

In support of Maryland's third Wave of Reform, the Department's Race to the Top submission, and recent legislative action directing the Department to adopt regulations which align teacher performance, in part, with student growth, the Department convened a Work Group to review and revise the existing structure as necessary.

Consistent with the practice in the development of regulations, Department staff identified a variety of constituents to serve on the Work Group: human resource directors, local school system and nonpublic school administrators, State institution personnel, education/union representatives, and representatives from higher education. The Work Group met monthly from September 2010 through April 2011; Work Group members provided background information and staff collected national data. After considerable deliberation, the Final Report (attached) was published and presented to the PSTEB on June 2, 2011.

Since the initial presentation, the PSTEB has been engaged in extensive discussion regarding the six proposed recommendations. At its meeting on December 1, 2011, the PSTEB requested a summary of their discussion as follows:

Recommendation 1: Revise the current certification system to include a license for those individuals who are not required by regulation to hold a certificate.

The PSTEB favors this recommendation as proposed. If adopted, this would mean that a "license" would be awarded to those not required by regulation to hold a credential for their current position, and a "certificate" would be awarded to those required by regulation to hold a credential for their current position.

Recommendation 2: Eliminate the requirement for obtaining a master's degree for teachers. The master's degree remains a requirement for those seeking certification as an Administrator or Supervisor and/or Specialist.

The PSTEB does not favor this recommendation. The PSTEB supports the existing certification structure which provides options for obtaining the Advanced Professional Certificate: master's degree, master's equivalency (a combination of college coursework and locally/state approved Continuing Professional Development credits), or National Board Certification and twelve graduate credits.

The PSTEB believes strongly in professional development as an expectation for all educators and recognizes that professional development can come in many forms. The PSTEB also believes that Maryland's current certification structure allows for various options to meet the requirement and that professional development, in addition to being expected, should be acknowledged. Requiring all teachers to earn an APC within ten years assures acknowledged, continuous professional growth for those who facilitate learning for Maryland's students.

Recommendation 3: Differentiate the credential for those required to hold certification and those who are not required to hold certification.

The PSTEB favors this recommendation with amendments necessary to reflect its position on Recommendation #2. The amended recommendation would:

- *Issue a "Practitioner License" to all applicants who meet credentialing requirements. This would replace the existing Professional Eligibility Certificate.
- *Issue an "Initial Professional Certificate" to those hired in a position requiring credentialing. Movement to this certificate would be automatic based on the employment decision. This is a new credential.
- *Issue a "Standard Professional Certificate" upon verification of three years of satisfactory experience and renewal requirements.
- *Issue an "Advanced Professional Certificate" within ten years upon verification of satisfactory experience and renewal requirements.

Recommendation 4: Recommit to the importance of rigorous and relevant professional development as a continued requirement for certification and certificate renewal. Moreover, expand the opportunities for continuing professional development which will contribute to student growth. Encourage the use of job-embedded professional development activities. Limit the use of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to specific certificate holders, such as School Psychologists, Guidance Counselors, and School Social Workers whose professional organizations provide relevant professional development activities and experiences.

The PSTEB favors this recommendation. There was considerable discussion about the encouragement of job-embedded professional development. Whereas the PSTEB endorsed the concept, several members were concerned that this might be interpreted as mandatory infringement on teacher planning time. Although the recommendation does not speak to this matter, some PSTEB members were concerned that this might be an unintended consequence. The PSTEB urged that care be taken in its wording in regulation.

Recommendation 5: Facilitate the novice teacher's entry into the profession and the world of practice; eliminate the need for additional renewal credits while on the Initial Professional Certificate.

The PSTEB favors this recommendation although some concern was expressed over the fact that some teachers might postpone the accumulation of renewal credits and not get the professional development needed in the early years. It was noted, however, that many local school systems have employment requirements and provide the requisite professional development to meet those requirements.

Recommendation 6: Require 135 units for renewal. Renewal units may be college/university credits and/or continuing Professional Development Credits (CPDs) or other approved experiences determined by the local school system.

The PSTEB took no position on this recommendation. The PSTEB maintained that insufficient data were presented on why the current six credits were inadequate. It was discussed, however, that increasing the number of units (the equivalent of nine semester hours) was based on a review of the current requirements in other states and that the expanded options for professional development increase the availability of opportunities.

SUMMARY:

Adoption of the recommendations, wholly or in part, has major implications for potential revisions to other sections in COMAR.13A.12.01, General Provisions. At your request, we are presenting the Final Report and a summary of PSTEB's deliberations.

ACTION:

This item is presented for information only.

BJS: jes

Attachments (3)