

Teacher Education Update – February 4, 2011

A number of major changes in regard to educator preparation/educator certification have either recently been implemented or are in the discussion phases at the state level. It is very important that you review these very carefully and share them with your students, advisees, and colleagues as appropriate.

Changes already approved by the Illinois State Board of Education

Testing Changes

All Certification Tests

Effective January 2010, there is a limit on the number of times that an individual can take any given test. No individual will be allowed to take any given test (ie. Basic Skills Test, Content Test, APT) more than five times. For this reason, individuals not passing the test should not repeat the test without taking measures to remediate their areas of weakness. Attempts taken prior to January 2010 do not count towards an individual's five attempts.

Basic Skills Test

Effective September 2010, the State of Illinois increased the minimum passing scores required on the Basic Skills Test. In order to pass the test, candidates must achieve passing scores on each of the three sub-tests (Reading Comprehension, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Writing). If a candidate, on a test attempt on or after September 2010, passes one or more of the sub-tests they will not need to retake that sub-test (although the cost remains the same). Information for candidates on retaking the Basic Skills can be found at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL15_retake.asp

Please help candidates understand that the test itself has not changed but the increase in minimum passing scores is dramatic. To pass a given sub-test they need to answer approximately 80% of the items on that sub-test correct. After two administrations, the state-wide pass rate on the Basic Skills Test as a whole is only about 25% (compared to over 70% passing under the old minimum scores) with pass rates on the individual sub-tests in Reading Comprehension, Language Arts and Mathematics all below 50% (the pass rate on the Writing sub-test is over 90%). **All candidates** should be encouraged to review the test framework (http://www.icts.nesinc.com/PDFs/IL_fld300_FW.pdf) and at the very least take the Basic Skills Diagnostic Test (http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp) prior to taking the test in order to identify their weaknesses (remember that a sub-test score of 80% or higher is required to pass a given sub-test). Furthermore, it is highly recommended that candidates develop a study plan focused on these areas of weakness using resources available on campus and on the web. A current list of resources is available at: A committee is currently working on updating these resources and possibly developing a series of workshops to help students succeed on this high cost/high stakes test. More information on how to assist candidates with this requirement will be coming out soon.

All faculty and advisors are also encouraged to take the Basic Skills Diagnostic Test (it is entirely confidential and free) in order to better understand and help their candidates with this requirement. Once again the diagnostic test can be found at http://www.icts.nesinc.com/IL_practest_opener.asp.

C or Better Requirement in All Coursework Used for Graduation

According to Section 125.100 of the Illinois Administrative Code governing teaching certification, effective February 1, 2012 all professional education and content-area coursework that forms part of an application for certification, endorsement or approval must have been passed with a grade no lower than "C". Furthermore, according to additional guidance provided by the Illinois State Board of Education, the "C" or better requirement includes any course that constitutes part of an approved teacher education program (including general education and elective courses regardless of where the courses were taken) leading to certification via entitlement.

For this reason, on October 12, 2010 the Council on Teacher Education (COTE) passed the following:

All students graduating after December 2011 with a teacher certification major must receive a grade of "C" or better in all courses, regardless where they are taken, used toward graduation including general education, professional education, major and minor courses, all university required courses, and electives. Furthermore, any course used for the purpose of adding endorsements to a teaching certificate must be completed with a grade of "C" or better.

All post baccalaureate teacher certification candidates completing a teacher certification program after December 2011 must receive a grade of "C" or better in all courses, regardless where they are taken, used toward completion of the program. Furthermore, any course used for the purpose of adding endorsements to a teaching certificate must be completed with a grade of "C" or better.

Notations have been added to the degree audit system so that students are aware of the change and can easily identify what courses they have received grades of below "C". It is highly recommended that advisors notify students of this change during their next advising appointment or earlier. If you would like to see a sample notification email please let me know.

Revised Illinois Professional Teaching Standards/Revised APT

No later than July 1, 2013, all approved teacher preparation programs shall submit the course of study for that program with evidence that the program's or course's content is congruent with the revised Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (23 Ill. Adm. Code 24.130). No later than September 1, 2013, the assessment of professional teaching (APT) required for the issuance of an initial teaching certificate under 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.720 (Certification) shall be based on these revised standards.

The revised Illinois Professional Teaching Standards can be found in Section 24.130 within the following link - <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/24ark.pdf>. During Spring 2011 we will need to begin a complete review and alignment of our curriculum and assessments with these new

standards. This will be followed by curriculum revisions and council approvals during 2011-2012 so that we can take all of our programs back before the Illinois State Teacher Certification Board in Fall 2012. Please take time to review these new standards.

Additional Endorsements on Secondary Teaching Certificates

According to Section 125.100 of the Illinois Administrative Code governing teaching certification, effective February 1, 2012 candidates wanting to qualify for additional high school level (9-12) endorsements on their secondary teaching certificate must complete a minimum of 24 semester hours in the subject-area (with at least 12 semester hours being at the upper division) and pass the content test in that subject area. The exceptions to this requirement are in social science and science which still require 32 semester hours and the test.

Changes in the Requirements for the Driver Education Endorsement

The requirements for the Driver Education endorsement will change for anyone applying for and completing the requirements for the endorsement on or after February 1, 2012. The requirements for the endorsement will be much more extensive and stringent, requiring 24 semester hours of specific coursework. The Department of Health Studies is currently taking the revised Minor in Driver Education through the curriculum process. Under the new requirements the coursework required for the minor is the same coursework required to qualify for the endorsement.

Illinois Common Core Standards

The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted new Math and English Language Arts standards for K-12 education known as the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core. The goal is to better prepare Illinois students for success in college and the workforce in a competitive global economy. These new standards are part of the national standards movement. In our educator preparation programs we need to begin to transition to the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core without totally eliminating the old Illinois Learning Standards. ISBE is currently working on a crosswalk between the two sets of standards and they encourage us to help our pre-service teachers understand and utilize the crosswalk so they can assist the schools with the transition. More information on the New Illinois State Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core can be found at http://www.isbe.net/common_core/default.htm

Illinois State Board of Education Program Reports

The Illinois State Board of Education now requires us to annually submit a program report for each of our approved educator preparation programs (both undergraduate and graduate). For this year I was able to take care of the reports for all 37 of our programs (submitted on February 1, 2011). Our next annual reports will be due in Fall 2011 for the 2010-2011 academic year. For the 2010-2011 annual reports I will be asking for the assistance of program chairs and coordinators in collecting the data. If you would like a copy of the report that was submitted for your program please let me know (unfortunately I do not have electronic copies but would be more than happy to send a hard copy).

Changes under discussion by the Illinois State Board of Education

The following items are on the agenda for discussion by the Illinois State Teacher Certification Board and the Illinois State Board of Education. These changes would require legislative changes as well as changes in the rules. It appears that the plan is to develop legislative proposals for the Spring 2011 session with implementation (if passed and rules written) in 2013 or later.

Consolidation to a Single Professional License with Grade-level/Subject-area endorsements

Currently, individuals may obtain multiple certificates for various grade levels, supervisory areas, and specialty areas. This proposal would create a single professional license, Illinois Professional Educator License, which would list the validity dates, grade levels and subjects for which an individual is eligible to be employed. With this consolidation, additional endorsements at the elementary level would be developed to document expertise in specified areas. In addition, the requirements for teaching in grades 5-8 would likely be increased (discussion has included increasing the hours to 24 in the content field and require a content test). The license would be valid for five years.

Elimination of the Three-Tiered (initial, standard, master) Certification Structure

With the consolidation to a single professional license, the plan is to eliminate the three-tiered certification structure. The requirements for continuing professional development would continue.

Require Passage Content Tests Prior to Beginning Student Teaching/Passage of APT Prior to Completing Student Teaching

Proposed changes would require a candidate to pass (a) any content area test prior to beginning student teaching and (b) the APT examination for the appropriate grade levels in order to successfully complete his or her student teaching requirement. While most institutions already require the content test prior to student teaching (EIU included) and some institutions require the APT test in order to complete the approved program (EIU does not) this would make this requirement a state law.