

**ILLINOIS STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION BOARD
* Special Meeting ***

**Illinois State Board of Education
Springfield, Illinois
(Teleconference)**

Friday, February 13, 2004

MINUTES

Call to Order / Roll Call:

Robert Schiller, Chairman, Illinois State Teacher Certification Board, called the Illinois State Teacher Certification Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. This special meeting was conducted via telephone conference call, with members, staff and guests participating from Chicago, Springfield and other locations throughout the state.

Dr. Schiller asked Dennis Williams, Interim Secretary, to call the roll. A quorum was not present at the beginning of the meeting; however, several members arrived shortly after the roll call and a quorum was available during most of the meeting.

Dr. Schiller noted that the purpose of the meeting was to review a discussion paper on streamlining the requirements for initial-to-standard and certificate renewal and no votes would be taken. He also noted that because there was a limited amount of time available for this meeting, the second agenda topic originally planned for this meeting – i.e., the criteria for highly qualified veteran teachers and special education teachers – had been deferred to a more appropriate time.

Members Present:

Robert E. Schiller, Chairman
Dennis Williams, Interim Secretary

Kay Acklin
William Briggs
Bruce Dennison
Connee Fitch-Blanks

Nan Giblin
Laura Lipe
Linda Malone
Mary Jane Morris

Linda Tafel
Denise Williams
Eugene Zalewski

Members Absent:

Marsha Allen
Andrew Brulle
Roger Chamberlain
Deidre Dare

Nina Dorsch
Barbara Eason-
Watkins
Brenda Humphrey

Elliott Lessen

Others Present:

Laura Barwegen
Bob Bigham
Deborah Curtis

Lee Patton
Lou Ann Reichle
Susan Shea

Sally Vogl
Karen Williams

Public Participation:

Susan Shea, Illinois Education Association (IEA), indicated that she did not have anything to say if a vote was not going to be taken. However, she asked that she have a chance to voice concerns if a vote was called. Dr. Schiller noted that this meeting was intended to result in an open dialogue, so it was agreed that public participation would be invited whenever it seemed appropriate to the discussion.

Facilitation Committee's Report:

The Facilitation Committee did not meet prior to this meeting; however, members of the Committee requested that the changes in dates for the next several Certification Board meetings be sent to members in writing.

Items for Discussion:

The focus of the meeting was the "Discussion Paper on Streamlining Requirements for Moving from Initial to Standard Certification and Streamlining Teacher Certificate Renewal System." This discussion was a follow-up to information received from the field, LPDC chairs, etc. Dr. Schiller requested feedback from State Teacher Certification Board members on two issues:

- (1) Teachers who possess both a standard certificate and initial certificate;
and

Dr. Schiller described a staff concern regarding the professional development requirements for teachers who had received a standard-level certificate in the certificate exchange and had subsequently received an additional certificate that was issued at the initial level. He noted that

neither the law nor the rules provided guidance on these matters, but that the best interests of these teachers would be served if their initial certificates were replaced with similar certificates at the standard level. Linda Tafel recalled discussing this issue during Certification Board meetings and said that she believed that the original intent was that subsequent certificates be issued at the standard level. Other members concurred with this understanding, even though it had not been included in the rules or procedures. The State Teacher Certification Board then agreed that the initial certificates of the teachers in this group should be immediately replaced with standard certificates and the teachers informed of the implications for their professional development. LPDCs and ROEs would also be notified about the change and its meaning for their responsibilities. Dr. Schiller indicated that the agency would act immediately on this plan.

(2) Veteran out-of-state teachers.

Dr. Schiller reported on concerns regarding the level of certificates awarded to teachers who come to Illinois from other states with four or more years of experience. Under current law, a teacher who has not met the Illinois requirements for standard-level certification must be given an initial-level certificate, regardless of his or her years of teaching experience. Dr. Schiller and staff suggested that the requirements for moving from initial-to-standard certification are focused on the needs of beginning teachers and that requiring experienced teachers to meet those requirements may be a deterrent to their coming to Illinois. The proposal for Certification Board consideration was to assign an out-of-state teacher with four or more years of experience a standard-level certificate. After some discussion, the State Teacher Certification Board concurred that out-of-state teachers who are otherwise eligible for an Illinois certificate (e.g., they have graduated from a program with which Illinois has reciprocity) should be eligible for a standard-level certificate if he or she has met the requirements for second-tier certification in the previous state – even though the years of teaching required in the other state may be less than is required in Illinois. Bob Bigham indicated that the level of an out-of-state certificate is usually printed on the certificate so this could be accomplished without a great deal of research or additional submissions by the candidate. The State Teacher Certification Board further indicated that if the teacher's previous state did not have a tiered-certificate system, he or she would receive an initial certificate and would not be eligible for the standard certificate until he or she met the professional development requirements. There was consensus on these two proposals for clarifying the requirements for the certification-level and professional development requirements of out-of-state teachers. These proposals would require legislation.

Standard Certificate Eligibility and Certificate Renewal.

Staff summarized the discussion paper that had been prepared on the basis of previous discussions about streamlining certificate renewal and providing additional resources for initial certificate holders to establish standard-certificate eligibility. It was emphasized that the State Teacher Certification Board was being asked to react to ideas and that no votes would be requested or taken. It was also emphasized that the next steps and the timeline for action were in the hands of the legislature.

The following is a summary of Certification Board discussion and preferred action on the issues and ideas presented in the discussion paper.

Certificate Renewal Purposes

State Teacher Certification Board members expressed concern about the proposal to add another purpose (to meet requirements for becoming “highly qualified”), noting that even though this is appropriate, it can already be considered as part of the current Certificate Renewal purposes. Some members thought the purposes should be reduced to only two or three; Susan Shea commented on the political viability of opening this issue up. The group concurred that the current four purposes should be retained with the clarification that the NCLB requirement can be met via Purpose A.

The group strongly supported the idea of eliminating the required allocation of activities/time among the purposes, except as required by the federal court (Corey H.) for special education teachers.

Professional Development Plan

Connee Fitch-Banks indicated that she believed the requirement for a professional development plan should be continued so that teachers think ahead of what they need to do. Discussion ensued about encouraging teachers to have a plan for professional development but giving them the freedom of a professional. Most members supported the idea of maintaining a plan requirement, but eliminating the LPDC approval of a plan and amendments to that plan. Sally Vogl, Illinois State Board of Education rules coordinator, commented upon the difficulty of having a requirement in law for a plan, but no follow-up on whether teachers had a plan or not.

A recommendation was made that the role of the LPDC would be to review plans to ensure that they are consistent with the law, at the teacher’s request. During the additional discussion, Susan Shea responded that the IEA will not support a proposal that does include the

requirement of a written plan. Ultimately, the group indicated that teachers should be required to submit a plan to the LPDC for review but not approval. The LPDC action would be to verify that a plan had been developed. The plan would then be resubmitted at the end of the process, along with evidence of the teacher's activities.

Submission of Claims for Credit, Evidence, and Other Information

The State Teacher Certification Board members agreed that eliminating LPDC approval of the certificate renewal plan should be accompanied by elimination of the requirement for submission to and LPDC approval of changes to the plan. There was some concern about the proposal that teachers submit evidence only at the end of the cycle, with members noting that LPDCs and ROEs could be flooded at the end of the cycle. After lengthy discussion, the group concurred that teachers should submit a summary of their professional development at the end of the cycle (or whenever they complete their requirements) and that they should maintain the evidence in their own files. That evidence would be subject to regular audits by the ROE and if teachers were found to not be keeping records, they would lose their certificate.

Linda Malone expressed concern about teachers keeping their own evidence and what might happen in cases of tragedies such as fires, etc. The response was that this would be covered in the appeals process, including documentation of the tragedy and dealt with on a case-by-case basis. There may be documentation in other places as well, such as transcripts from an institution. It was also suggested that scanning documentation on a web server would ensure that an electronic portfolio is always available, regardless of location and situation.

There was support for greater use of the online CeRTS system.

ROE and LPDC Roles

Several members expressed concern about giving the role of approving a candidate's eligibility for certificate renewal to ROEs, when a reduction in ROEs has been proposed by the governor and Chicago's ROE has already been deleted. Dr. Schiller responded that this reduction may or may not happen and if it does will not happen until July 2005. Members also questioned whether the ROE had the capacity to review all of the paperwork involved in the review and approval of evidence of completion of professional development. Bruce Dennison was asked to comment upon moving the documentation forms to the ROE. He believed that at the ROE level there were systems in place and they would be able to do this; however, he indicated that there are probably difficulties that would be in the details.

Despite concern that the LPDCs are overwhelmed the proposal in the discussion paper to transform their role to providing leadership and support for the quality of local regional professional development programs was not acceptable to the State Teacher Certification Board. Members emphasized that teachers must maintain control of this process. Therefore, the group wants the role of the LPDC to be reviewed and verification of the required certificate renewal plan, final action on certificate renewal eligibility based upon summary of activities in conformance with rules, and submission of recommendation to ROE.

Eligible Activities for Certificate Renewal

Lee Patton clarified that the suggested list of eligible activities was a streamlined version of the current list, with an emphasis on those directly related to the improvement of the teacher's knowledge and skills. She indicated that the goal of providing a focused list was to make reporting and tracking easier for the teacher and the LPDCs, and she noted that there was a typographical error in the list, which should have included "workshops." After discussion about the need to ensure continued credit for "lane workshops" and activities such as membership on the State Teacher Certification Board, the members concurred that all currently eligible activities should be maintained.

Eligible Activities for Moving from Initial-to-Standard Certification

Dr. Schiller indicated that the State Board remained supportive of the "agreement" made in the fall regarding changes to the activities for moving from initial-to-standard certification. However, since that legislation (HB 4230) has not been called and informal response has indicated that some legislators believe the agreed modifications would "water-down" their intent, the discussion paper provides additional options. Karen Williams, representing the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT), indicated that there is bipartisan support for the bill.

The group concluded that as long as the "agreement" is in the legislature, there was no reason to consider anything else.

Advanced Level Certification

There were several questions about the idea of providing "advanced-level" certification for teachers who have obtained an advanced degree; despite some conceptual support, there was concern that this might be perceived as complicating a system which is in need of simplification.

Because of time constraints, the group chose not to discuss any additional concerns or ideas raised in the discussion paper.

Update on Legislative Issues:

Discussion focused on HB 5002, which requires that early childhood and elementary certificate holders devote one-half of their professional development in the teaching of reading. Susan Shea indicated that the IEA opposes this legislation and she expects some changes to this bill. Nan Giblin indicated that it would be difficult for colleges and universities to meet this need, and there was a strong consensus that the state does not have the capacity at any level to meet the proposed requirement.

Susan Shea shared information about the SAELP group and its desire for legislation that would create certification for a “teacher leader.” She indicated that she was concerned about the salary implications for teachers at the bargaining table.

Adjournment:

The Illinois State Teacher Certification Board adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

APPROVED

Chairman

Secretary