ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Work-Study Session I
May 17, 2001

Agenda Topic: Draft Content-Area Standards for School Service Personnel, Special Education Directors, and Middle Grade Teachers

Materials: Draft Illinois Content-Area Standards for School Counselor, School Nurse, School Psychologist, School Social Worker, and Director of Special Education

Middle Level Education Content-Area Standards: Final Report

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Purposes of Agenda Item

• Presentation of recommendations for a modified certificate structure for Illinois school service personnel, directors of special education, and middle level educators;

• Presentation of proposed standards and associated knowledge and performance indicators for school service personnel, directors of special education, and middle level educators;

• Examination of unique features of the suggested standards and structure; and

• Identification of next steps.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item

• Understanding of the differences between the current preparation requirements and the proposed; and

• Comments and direction for future work of the advisory panels.

Background Information

Before the panels recommending professional standards for teachers and administrators completed their work in early 2000, public school, higher
education, and parent representatives were being asked to serve on another cohort of advisory committees. In spring 2000, six panels were convened to draft the first iteration of standards and to develop certificate structure recommendations for directors of special education, four school service personnel endorsements (i.e., school social worker, school psychologist, school nurse, and school counselor), and qualifications for middle level educators.

The more than 100 members of the advisory groups worked intently from spring into late last fall. As with the teacher and administrator panels, the school service personnel, special education director, and middle level representatives were advised to be attentive to any national standards that exist in the respective fields and to assure support for the Illinois Learning Standards for students. Members also were asked to consider impacting issues such as personnel shortages and outdated certification practices that inhibit the expeditious training and employment of high quality education professionals.

The first draft of the advisory panel recommendations was delivered to Division of Professional Preparation staff in December 2000, with the subsequent distribution of the standards in early 2001. Since that time, more than 5000 copies of the standards have been shared with members of various professional associations (e.g., Illinois School Psychologists Association, Illinois Association of School Nurses, etc.), colleges and universities, the IEA and the IFT, and the State Teacher Certification Board. The panel recommendations have been available on the division website since late January, and an e-mail address continues to welcome comments on the efforts of the advisory groups.

Nine forums were conducted in March to solicit feedback on the recommendations and to inform the public. Approximately 75 people attended the forums, including P-12 teachers, local administrators, and faculty from community colleges and four-year institutions. Written correspondence and emails provided just over 100 additional comments. Participant responses were favorable, and written comments generally supported the recommendations and the proposed standards. Most respondents believed content-area standards are necessary and will assist educational personnel in helping students achieve the Illinois Learning Standards.

Beyond the formal comments, presentations have been made over the past few months at conferences for state and national professional organizations, such as the Illinois Counseling Association (ICA), the Association of Illinois Middle Schools (AIMS), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the Illinois Association of School Social Workers (IASSW). Discussion groups and question and answer sessions during these meetings provided additional feedback. All comments will be shared with the panels as they continue to revise and refine the standards and structure.

Included in this report are:
• the basis for the proposed changes;
• features of the various modifications to the current certificate structure and the proposed standards and indicators;
• a brief synopsis of the comments for each set of standards;
• policy, budget, and legislative implications of the recommendations; and
• next steps.

Advisory Panels’ Proposals

The State Board’s adoption of the *Illinois Framework* in November 1996 signaled the commencement of the transition from a course-based educator preparation model to one predicated upon standards. Acknowledging the need to revise dated requirements and recognizing the inadequacies of a certification structure based on semester hours and “seat time,” the Board initiated a comprehensive reform movement intent upon assuring quality educators in every school and every classroom.

In the years since the adoption of the *Framework*, the State Board has

• authorized the development and implementation of core standards for teachers (i.e., the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards) modeled on those designed by the Interstate New Teachers and Assessment Consortium (INTASC) of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO);
• adopted core standards for school leaders (i.e., the Illinois School Leader Standards) similar to those developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), also supported by the CCSSO;
• approved significant revisions to teacher and administrator certificates, including the elimination of nearly 40 endorsements;
• adopted standards for 37 teaching fields, including endorsements and designations; and
• approved administrative standards for principals, superintendents, and chief school business officers.

House Bill 452 (Public Act 90-548), passed by the General Assembly in 1997, provided the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board, the “power and authority” to “set standards for teaching, supervising, or holding other certificated employment in the public schools” and to “establish standards for the issuance of new types of certificates.” This statute allows the State Board to approve standards for teachers, administrators, school service personnel, and other certificated employees of the public schools.

The revised certification structure recommended by the advisory panels, coupled with the proposed standards, will improve the quality and effectiveness of school service personnel, directors of special education, and middle level educators.
The standards reflect the efforts of other states, are attentive to the work of various national professional associations, are based exclusively on research and best practice, and are designed to improve services and instruction for public school children, key factors in advancing student achievement.

Like the recommendations developed by the teaching and administrator advisory panels, these proposals suggest revisions in two areas: the structure of the existent certificate system and the standards demanded to prepare school service personnel, special education directors, and middle grade practitioners.

Where changes to current certificates are recommended, most can be accommodated through rules. In nearly all instances, alterations to the various endorsements on the School Service Personnel Certificate can be made through rulemaking, and the proposed changes in the qualifications for special education directors also can be accomplished through the rules.

If the State Board approves a new certificate for middle level educators, a change in the statute will be necessary. Moreover, the Board will want to consider modifications to other certificates that overlap the one for middle grade instruction. For instance, a Middle Level Certificate for grades 5 through 9 will overlay the current elementary (grades K-9), the secondary (grades 6-12), and special (grades K-12) certificates. In this event, the State Board will determine the appropriateness of the current certification structure and/or develop a revision to it. Similarly, a recommendation by the School Psychology panel to extend the age range of the School Service Personnel Certificate from 5 to 21 to birth to 21 will require legislative approval.

The content-area standards reflect the critical understandings and expectations necessary for effective service as a middle level educator, school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, or special education director. Varying numbers of knowledge and performance indicators support each standard.

The standards and indicators serve two purposes:

- to be approved, training programs must evidence that their curricula meet each standard and indicator; and
- to demonstrate competence on each standard, the candidate must address the knowledge and performance indicators.

The first will be assured through an examination of each program by trained national and state panels of public school and university educators, a campus visit by the site team, and scores on the appropriate Illinois certification subject-matter knowledge tests (i.e., Title II). Results of these reviews will be presented to the State Teacher Certification and the State Board of Education. Institutions
that fail to demonstrate appropriate compliance will be placed on probation or have their recognized status to train educational personnel rescinded.

The second item, candidate competence against each standard, will be affirmed through the state certification testing system, multiple and varied performance and content evaluations conducted throughout the approved program as required by NCATE 2000, and independent verifications of the institution’s assessment process by a campus review of trained team members. Candidates who fail to evidence competence against the standards and the associated indicators will be denied certification.

The Standards

The following section highlights the recommendations of each panel and the field comments. Additionally, a brief description of the current course-based semester hour and clock hour requirements is included for purposes of comparison.

*School Counselor*

**Current Requirements**

Requirements for the present Guidance endorsement include possession or eligibility for possession of a teaching certificate and a master’s degree from a recognized teacher training institution with an approved program in guidance. Study qualifications require the accumulation of 30 semester hours in various areas, such as human growth and development, social and cultural foundations, the “helping relationship,” appraisal of the individual, research, professional orientation, and more. Candidates must complete a 100 clock hour practicum and an internship of 600 clock hours, although 300 hours may be demanded if the student has two or more years of teaching experience.

**Panel Recommendations**

The School Counselor Advisory Panel indicates the standards and associated proposals are based on National Standards for School Counseling programs and the *2001 Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs*. Members also consulted the *Developmental Counseling Model for Illinois Schools* developed by the Illinois Counseling Association, *School Counseling Specialization Draft Standards* by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and *Sharing the Vision: The National Standards for School Counseling Programs* from the American School Counselor Association.

The panel has developed more than 20 standards across six thematic domains (e.g., comprehensive delivery system, planning, assessment, and evaluation, fieldwork, etc.). Members have issued recommendations on the certification
process, practicum and internship experiences, advanced certification, and more. The recommendations propose:

⇒ multiple avenues for achieving school counselor certification, two of which do not require possession or eligibility for a teaching certificate;
⇒ changing the title of the endorsement from guidance to school counselor;
⇒ retaining the closely supervised 600 clock hour internship requirement but eliminating the 300 clock hour option for teachers with two or more years of teaching experience;
⇒ programs should follow the National Standards for School Counseling and accreditation by Counseling and Counseling Related Educational Programs (CACREP);
⇒ a compensated internship;
⇒ a “mandate” that requires school counselors to be available across the grade range of public education;
⇒ a student to counselor ratio not to exceed 250 to 1, as opposed to the 800 to 1 now found in Illinois;
⇒ advanced certification be available to those who have achieved national certification as a school counselor with compensation appropriate to the national distinction; and
⇒ required continuing professional development for recertification.

Comments

Approximately half of all comments received related to the school counselor standards. Several said the standards do “an excellent job of expressing the need for counselors” in all schools, elementary, middle and high school. The proposed standards were described as “realistic and attainable” and easily infused into university preparation programs. There was agreement with most of the panel’s recommendations including:

- a ratio of 250 students to one school counselor;
- a remunerated internship;
- a certificate renewal process;
- the availability of school counselors at all grade levels; and
- a master-level certificate.

However, two of the panel’s recommendations generated significant opposition. Comments suggested a 600-clock-hour internship should not be required; and national accreditation by CACREP should not be mandatory. It is curious that comments would oppose the existent requirement of the 600-clock-hour internship. However, current requirements allow candidates with two years or more of teaching experience to complete a significantly shorter internship of 300 clock hours, and the advisory panel did not support the continuation of this option.
Opinions were evenly divided on the alternative school counselor certification recommendation. Some believed school counselors should complete a teacher training program and be eligible for a teaching certificate, while others contended, like the panel members, that additional study in public school issues (e.g., classroom management, school climate, etc.) should be sufficient to prepare school counselors. A few respondents questioned whether licensed counselors (with no teaching certificate) could perform many of the school counselor duties outlined in the standards.

Many affirmed that the standards are noteworthy and important, and that rigorous standards are crucial to the school counselor profession. A few advised that the adoption of more rigorous standards might deter candidates from entering the profession and thereby aggravate the existent shortages of counselors.

**School Nurse**

**Current Requirements**

To be endorsed as a School Nurse, the candidate must possess a license as a registered professional nurse, have a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution, and have completed a minimum of 30 semester hours of study from an approved School Nurse program. A one-year internship and successful completion of the state testing requirements also are demanded.

Coursework is required in seven areas (e.g., theory and practice of nursing, human growth and development, educational psychology, introduction to sociology, etc.). Remaining preparation may be selected from as many as ten areas, some of which do not relate directly to school nursing practice (e.g., school administration, curriculum design, etc.).

**Panel Recommendations**

The 16 members of the School Nurse Advisory Panel consulted standards developed by the National Association of School Nurses, the Nursing and Advanced Practice Nursing Act of 2000, and a position paper on professional school nursing filed by the Illinois Association of School Nurses. The members have proposed a preamble to the recommended standards that affirm the skills and dispositions for the school nurse endorsement.

The panel recommends 12 standards and accompanying indicators that

⇒ replicate those for teachers (i.e., the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards); and
⇒ underscore the instructional responsibilities of the school nurse, particularly in the delivery of wellness information to students.
Members have included a brief glossary that highlights important baseline information, such as the American with Disabilities Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and more.

Comments

Written comments commended the State Board and the panel for preparing a “comprehensive guide…that details the professional knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with students and families.” While most believed the standards are thorough and well done, a few questioned the “vast” span of school nurse responsibilities enumerated in the standards.

District administrators apparently believe, from comments received, that the recommended standards would compromise their flexibility to hire registered nurses instead of certified school nurses as assured in the Illinois School Code. The panel’s work does not remove this option. When informed of this, superintendents found the standards to be acceptable.

Many respondents suggested the standards specify the ratio put forth by the National Association of School Nurses of 750 students per certified school nurse. Some noted that the number of students would need to be lower if the school included a high population of children with special needs.

School Psychologist

Current Requirements

Minimum requirements for a School Psychology endorsement on the School Service Personnel Certificate currently include a master’s degree or doctorate in psychology or educational psychology with a minimum of 60 semester hours of coursework, field experiences, and internship. Other qualifications demand proficiency in the assessment and diagnosis of children, adherence to a code of ethics, and good character as defined by the Illinois School Code.

Panel Recommendations

The advisory panel members have issued recommendations based on standards developed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). The report claims that each of the eight currently approved School Psychology programs in Illinois are approved by the NSAP thereby making the adoption of the proposed standards less problematic. Among the other recommendations of the panel are
⇒ a reaffirmation of the duration and expectations of current practicum and internship experiences;
⇒ the adoption of continuing professional development requirements for retention of the school psychologist endorsement;
⇒ the allowance of nationally certified school psychologists to practice in Illinois without additional qualifications;
⇒ the provision of transcript reviews of out-of-state applicants by approved Illinois School Psychology programs, with a subsequent certification recommendation to the State Teacher Certification Board;
⇒ the extension of the age range of the School Service Personnel Certificate for school psychologists from 5 to 21 to birth to 21; and
⇒ a requirement that entry-level school psychologists be able to demonstrate competence against each of the domains defined by the panel.

Comments

Although only a few comments were received regarding the school psychologist standards, the respondents voiced strong support. Concern was raised at several forums that standards are being established at the same time that critical shortages exist. Some worried that the standards may be so demanding that they will discourage people from entering the profession. Others commented that it would be difficult to differentiate between entry-level and experienced school psychologists in assessing competence. It was suggested there be a ratio of students per school psychologist, consistent with the School Counselor Advisory Panel (i.e., 1 to 250 students).

School Social Worker

Current Requirements

Qualifications for the School Social Worker endorsement presently require the completion of 55 semester hours of graduate study, a supervised field experience, and an internship. Approved programs must be recognized by the State of Illinois and accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Preparation must include human behavior, social welfare policy, social work theory, methods, and practice, research methodology, characteristics of exceptional children, and social work practice in the schools. The supervised field experience must total at least 400 clock hours, and an internship in the public schools of 600 hours is demanded.

Panel Recommendations

Members of the School Social Work Advisory Panel have developed proposed standards based on those promulgated by the Council on Social Work Education
and the Standards for School Social Work Services as presented by the National Association of Social Workers. The recommendations reinforce the role of the school social worker as a member of a team, working with teachers, administrators, other school service personnel (e.g., counselors, psychologists, etc.), and service providers outside the school. The suggested standards include

⇒ alignment with the core standards for teachers (i.e., Illinois Professional Teaching Standards);
⇒ acknowledgment of the code of professional ethics adopted by the National Association of Social Workers; and
⇒ knowledge and performance expectations on content, service delivery, planning, assessment, consultation and collaboration, advocacy and facilitation, the school as a learning community, diversity, and professional development.

Comments

Most comments praised the panel and endorsed the idea of certificate renewal. One e-mail stated that the standards provide “the specific focus, skill package, knowledge, research-base, and ethically constrained practice school social work offers.”

The majority of comments (13 out of 17) requested that many sections of the school counselor standards be duplicated in the standards for school social workers. Some of the responses indicated

- the standards are too general when compared with other school service personnel areas;
- certification and educational requirements are mentioned in the preface of other sets of standards, but not the school social workers (required masters degree from an accredited program);
- the knowledge and skills school social workers must possess for crisis intervention should be detailed;
- the role of the social worker in peer mediation, conflict resolution, and violence prevention programs is not addressed;
- the social worker’s role in providing consultation to peers and staff is absent;
- there should be a standard on understanding the needs of special education students, their teachers, and families; and
- specific reference to the Department of Child and Family Services should be made under Standard 5, Consultation and Collaborative Relationships.
Director of Special Education

Current Requirements

Current requirements for securing an approval to be a director of special education are cumbersome, complex, and do not reflect the professional skills and judgments necessary for the position. A “state approved director of special education,” according to rule, is a designation issued by the State Board of Education to a district or special education cooperative.

The director must hold an Administrator of Special Education approval and be employed as the head of a district or cooperative. When that individual leaves the particular district or cooperative, the director’s title does not move with him/her. As now structured, a special education director approval is bestowed upon a district or cooperative for a specific individual rather than an approval assigned to a person.

Qualifications for an Administrator of Special Education approval demand a valid Administrative Certificate, endorsed in any field, a master’s degree, and 30 semester hours of coursework distributed among five areas (e.g., survey of the exceptional child, methods in three areas of exceptionality, educational and psychological diagnosis of exceptional learners, etc.). Present requirements do not call for any prior training or experience in special education.

Panel Recommendations

The 28 directors of special education who served on the advisory panel have recommended a Director of Special Education credential to be granted to the individual who meets the designated certification requirements. Moreover, members propose that the certificate be recognized statewide, not just in the employing district or cooperative. Other recommendations require

⇒ the successful completion of the superintendent’s endorsement on the Administrative Certificate (Type 75); and
⇒ at least one of the following certificates: Standard Certificate in Special Education (P - Age 21); a School Service Personnel Certificate endorsed in School Psychology; or a School Service Personnel Certificate with a School Social Worker endorsement.

The panel’s proposal is predicated upon the core standards developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium and the Illinois School Leader Standards, the 1996 Standards for Special Education Administrators as proposed by the Illinois Special Education Leadership Academy, the content-area standards for superintendents, and the suggested, but not yet adopted, common core standards for all special education teachers.
Collectively, the proposed standards demand the facilitation of a vision for educational excellence, the promotion of a learning environment and instructional program that supports student achievement, an understanding of special education laws and regulations, the identification of students in need of services and the provision of those services, finance, management skills, and collaborative relationships with families, school districts, and the community.

Comments

Most respondents agreed that the standards represented “best practices” in special education. One panel member submitted testimony stating that the standards are “true reflections of the current responsibilities of directors of special education.”

However, many objected to the requirement for a superintendent endorsement, indicating it was not only inappropriate, but would discourage candidates from pursuing the credential. Respondents claimed the requirement would lead to extended preparation programs in a field where shortages are already critical, and would oblige candidates to complete more coursework focused on the superintendency than is necessary to perform the responsibilities of a special education director.

School counselors and school nurses requested that their endorsement areas be included in the list of certificate holders eligible to become directors of special education.

Middle Level Educators

Current Requirements

Effective July 1, 1997, qualifications for a middle school endorsement on the elementary or secondary certificate demand

\[ \Rightarrow \text{3 semester hours of study in middle school philosophy, curriculum and instructional methods for designing and teaching developmentally appropriate programs in the middle grades, including content-area reading instruction; and} \]

\[ \Rightarrow \text{3 semester hours of preparation in educational psychology focusing on the developmental characteristics of early adolescents and the role of the middle grade teacher in assessment, coordination, and referral of students to health and social services.} \]

Subject-area endorsements (e.g., language arts, science, etc.) require 18 semester hours of coursework, although qualifications in a second teaching field demand only 9 semester hours, the equivalent of about three courses.
Panel Recommendations

A preliminary report on suggested standards for middle level instructional personnel was shared with the State Board at its December 2000 meeting. Upon the direction of the State Superintendent and Board members, the panel met in January 2001 to examine each of the issues identified in the December staff report as well as questions and concerns posed by Board members. A “final draft” of the committee’s work was shared with staff in late January, and a comprehensive list of resources was addended.

The following are among the items addressed by the advisory committee in the second report:

⇒ expectations in writing and vocabulary have been added to the standards and indicators;
⇒ an emphasis on the importance of working with parents to familiarize them with the changing structure of the middle grades;
⇒ a recommendation to demand content depth in one subject field, with a preference for two; and
⇒ support for a middle level certificate for grades 5 through 9, with a five-year phase-out of the current six semester hour endorsement.

Comments

Most comments were favorable, indicating the standards for middle level educators were well written, reflect the National Middle School Guidelines, and are based upon research and best practice. Respondents indicated all of the important components of middle school philosophy are reflected in the standards, provide flexibility in training, and link to the Illinois Learning Standards for middle grade students.

One administrator wrote that preparation at the middle level offers a “thorough understanding of early adolescence, curriculum organization, collaborative practices, and engagement of parent.” The result will be “students who thrive both academically and socially, emotionally and physically.”

However, many voiced concerns that a separate certificate for middle level educators could negatively impact the number of middle level teachers. Administrators at the public forums said that it was extremely difficult now to find qualified candidates for middle level positions. Some feared a middle level credential would lead to an even greater shortage in this area. Several noted that the separate certificate would limit the grade range of a teacher’s qualifications. Many believed that most candidates would choose elementary education rather than both elementary and middle level if requirements increase and middle level becomes a separate certificate.
There was a concern raised that teachers prepared for the Standard Special Certificate (i.e., grades K-12) that is limited to one area (e.g., art, music, physical education, etc.) would not be required to meet middle level standards.

**Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action, and Communications**

**Policy**

The adoption of the content-area standards for teachers and administrators affirmed the State Board’s commitment, originally expressed in the 1996 *Illinois Framework*, to a standards-led system of preparing educational personnel. Consideration of this first version of the standards for school service personnel, directors of special education, and middle level educators again underscores the importance of standards-based preparation.

While no immediate policy concerns are reflected in this draft of the standards, final recommendations from the Middle Level Advisory Panel may cause the Board to examine extensive modifications to the structure and grade ranges of the early childhood, elementary, and secondary education certificates. Also, as some respondents noted, a reconsideration of the K-12 certificate may be in order as well. Other future policy considerations may include:

- the issuance of certificates to out-of-state applicants based on qualifications that do not precisely replicate those of Illinois candidates;
- an increase in clinical expectations balanced against reasonable program completion timelines;
- compensation for practica, internships, and, perhaps, student teaching; and
- continuing professional development and certificate renewal requirements for school service personnel.

Concerning this last point, the leaders of each of the school service personnel panels have been meeting independently for several months to develop recommendations for the renewal of Type 73 certificates. Their work is a reflection of their belief in the importance of continuing professional development and its connection to recertification. Although the Type 73 is not, at present, a multi-tiered certificate and does not require renewal, panel leaders clearly advocate the importance of initial and renewable standard certificates.

**Budget and Communications**

Assisting teacher-training institutions transition to the standards through program redesign will generate only a modest budget impact, probably through technical assistance. Relatively few colleges and universities sponsor approved school service personnel programs, and this will mediate the budget outlay. While most
institutions now provide the six semester hours of coursework for the middle grade endorsement, many will not pursue a middle level certification offering. This, too, will lessen the financial implications for the proposed system.

The development of effective communication streams and products is critical to an understanding, acceptance, and ultimate endorsement of the changes to program requirements and the certification system. As with the introduction of the teacher standards, NCATE 2000 unit standards, and other reform measures, a systematic communication strategy is important.

**Legislation Action**

Most of the recommended changes can be accommodated through rulemaking. Determinations of changes to rules and/or statutes will not be necessary until the panels present their final recommendations later this year.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Board should direct staff and the advisory panels to continue work on the recommendations and to share final sets of standards in January 2002.

**Next Steps**

The advisory panels will receive the comments from the educational community and the public within two weeks. Following receipt of the feedback, the members will be urged to reconvene, to consider the feedback, and to develop final recommendations that reflect the public reactions. Of course, Board guidance will be shared with the advisory committees as well.

Final panel reports will be submitted to staff in November 2001. The effective date for the final standards will be not later than July 2004, with earlier implementation strongly encouraged. State certification tests reflecting the adopted standards should be available at the time of implementation.