Agenda Topic: UIC-The Golden Apple Foundation Alternative Teacher Certification Program Proposal

Materials: Alternative Certification Program Proposal Staff Analysis
Alternative Certification Program Proposal
(Under Separate Cover)
105 ILCS 5/21-5b. Alternative Certification
(Under Separate Cover)

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Purpose of Agenda Item
To inform Board members of the program proposal request and action of the State Teacher Certification Board regarding the University of Illinois at Chicago, Golden Apple Foundation, and the Chicago Public Schools alternative teacher certification program proposal.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item
Board approval of the UIC/Golden Apple Foundation alternative teacher certification program.

Background Information
Section 5/21-5b of the Illinois School Code authorizes colleges and universities that partner with one or more not-for-profit organizations that support excellence in teaching to create and implement alternative certification programs. Per statute, the establishment and implementation of this program is done in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board and requires the State Board of Education to approve a course of study developed by a partnership within 30 days of proposal submission.

The University of Illinois at Chicago, in partnership with The Golden Apple Foundation and the Chicago Public Schools, submitted an alternative certification program proposal to increase the supply of qualified elementary teachers in Chicago. This proposal was analyzed by State Board staff and resulted in a recommendation for approval of the proposed program. The proposal and the staff analysis were forwarded to the State Teacher Certification Board for review and action.
At its May 4, 2001, meeting the State Teacher Certification Board (STCB) denied approval for this alternative route to elementary teacher certification program. Key questions/concerns of the STCB were: 1) why did the proposal not require applicants to have at least five years of work experience?; 2) will the instruction provided through this program be substantial enough in the area of reading so completers can effectively provide reading instruction?; and 3) will exposure to and preparation for providing instruction in an urban environment be adequate?

In response, staff explained that there is an exemption to the work experience requirement for programs serving the City of Chicago. Programs preparing individuals for “a provisional alternative teaching certificate for teaching in schools situated in a school district that is located in a city having a population in excess of 500,000 inhabitants” do not have to meet the requirement of having “been employed for at least 5 years.” In addition, representatives from the university and the Golden Apple Foundation communicated their intent to recruit individuals with experience and indicated that instruction in an urban environment is an integral part of the alternative certification program. They also expressed their commitment to develop skills in reading instruction as well as openness to follow-up review and evaluation of overall program effectiveness.

**Pros and Cons of Various Actions**

**Pro**

The program is designed to address a clear need for committed elementary teachers in Chicago Public Schools. Issues raised by the Certification Board can be addressed on an ongoing basis as the program develops.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

To approve the alternative route to elementary teacher certification program presented by UIC in partnership with the Golden Apple Foundation and Chicago Public Schools.

**Next Steps**

Approval by the State Board will allow the university/Golden Apple Foundation partnership to commence the program this summer. Candidates who successfully complete phase I of the program this summer (e.g., pedagogical study, state certification tests, etc.) will be eligible to intern in the Chicago Public Schools in the fall 2001.