TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent
        Christopher Koch, Director

Agenda Topic: Action Item - NCATE Protocol and Partnership Agreement

Materials: Draft NCATE Protocol (Attachment 1)
           Draft ISBE/NCATE Partnership Agreement (Attachment 2)
           Expenditure Survey Results (Attachment 3)

Staff Contact(s): Michael Long

Purpose of Agenda Item

- To provide the Board with a revised version of the NCATE/State Protocol and Partnership Agreement; and
- To inform the Board of the results of a survey on institutional expenditures related to ISBE and NCATE reviews and the redesign of educator preparation programs.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item

- To authorize the State Superintendent to sign and submit the proposed NCATE/State Protocol and Partnership Agreement by January 1, 2003.

Background Information

Subsequent to the October 16-17, 2002, meeting of the State Board, staff has incorporated the changes to the proposed protocol as detailed by Board members. The revised version has been shared with the Partnership Committee and the State Teacher Certification Board. Additional recommendations issued by these groups have been introduced to the agreement and protocol now submitted for consideration by the State Board.

Additionally, an expenditure survey was directed to 26 educator training institutions to learn the costs associated with State and NCATE accreditation reviews. The survey instrument also solicited information on the expenditures attributed to the redesign of educator preparation programs to align them with content standards and knowledge and performance indicators.
Analysis and Implications for Policy, Budget, Legislative Action and Communications

Analysis: NCATE/State Partnership Agreement and Protocol

In October, 2002, State Board members directed staff to make changes to the draft protocol submitted for discussion. (Attachment 1 highlights the changes in bold.) The current version offered for Board review has been simplified by identifying, where appropriate, expectations and activities shared by NCATE and the State Board. These changes have been incorporated in such areas as timelines, preconditions, unit standards, and other categories. Where State Board rules require actions beyond those prescribed by NCATE, a brief narrative has been inserted. The addition of such a narrative can be found in the protocol sections on the dates of the visit, program review documents, institutional report, and team members, among others. The net result of these changes is a streamlined protocol. (Changes to the protocol are highlighted in bold on Attachment 1.)

State Board members discussed the role of State Board staff on the site review team, and this issue has been addressed. Consultants from the Division of Professional Preparation and Recruitment will coordinate the preparation for the site review, and follow-up of the campus visit, while a trained representative from the public schools or higher education will serve as the chair or, on a joint visit with NCATE, co-chair of the State team. State Board staff will recommend to the State Teacher Certification Board and the State Board of Education a rule change to reflect the new roles and responsibilities of the chair and State consultant.

Staff will work with colleges and universities in designing the specialized training for team chairs, defining the qualifications for service as a chair, and drafting selection and evaluation criteria. Discussions also will focus on defining the relationship between the chair and the State Board staff consultant, particularly on pre- and post-visit matters. Staff will seek from NCATE the procedures it has employed in the selection and training of team chairs.

A final modification identified at the October Board meeting concerned the program report procedures an NCATE-accredited institution must observe in the event approval of a specialized professional association (SPA) is withdrawn. The protocol now directs the institution to file its program report with the State Board of Education. Of course, the university may file a separate report with the SPA if it seeks national recognition of the program.

Changes identified by the State Board were shared with the Partnership Committee at its October 23 meeting. Members were positive about the modifications, particularly the alteration in the role of the State Board staff consultant. Further discussions at the meeting resulted in two additional recommendations that staff endorses. The first allows institutions to submit their conceptual frameworks for review at least one year prior to the scheduled visit. The purpose of this change is to provide an opportunity for
an institution to garner feedback on its conceptual framework in time to make modifications before the team appears on the campus. The previous language limited the submission of the conceptual framework to one year in advance of the visit.

The second recommendation requires the educational unit to be notified 30 days in advance of the visit if any observers will be participating in the review. Recently, NCATE named two observers on Thursday before the commencement of a Saturday visit, and the institution contended this was inappropriate; State Board staff concurs. Observers on State teams have been named with all other team members, typically three months before the site review.

The changes recommended by the Partnership Committee and the modifications identified by the State Board were shared with the State Teacher Certification Board at its November 1 meeting. While there were several questions on the purpose of the protocol and the site review process, Certification Board members did not suggest any changes.

Analysis: Review and Program Redesign Expenditure Survey

In response to a question posed at the October State Board meeting, staff constructed a survey designed to elicit information on the costs experienced by institutions in association with State reviews and, if applicable, NCATE visits. Actual or anticipated expenditures related to the redesign of preparation programs to align them with State content standards were also solicited in the survey.

The instrument was sent by fax to 26 institutions, and 16 (61.5%) replied by November 6. Colleges and universities reviewed in the fall 2001, spring 2002, and fall 2003 were surveyed. Those institutions scheduled for visits in the spring 2003, fall 2003, and spring 2004 also were asked to respond. Of those surveyed, 16 (61.5%) institutions are private colleges, and ten (38.5%) are under public control. Ten institutions are NCATE accredited, while 16 are not, although one is seeking national recognition in the spring 2003.

The data on Attachment 3 detail the mean expenditures for each category (e.g., personnel, new hires, travel, etc.) and for each survey field (i.e., ISBE Review, NCATE Review, and Program Redesign). The data suggest institutions expend fewer dollars on State visits ($44,653) than on NCATE reviews ($69,086). Those who completed the miscellaneous category typically included expenses related to telecommunications, NCATE dues, food and beverages, and other ancillary costs.

The largest expenditure reported in each field is personnel costs, with respondents reporting salaries up to $280,000 for joint NCATE and State visits. The range for State-only reviews extended from no costs to $154,489, while NCATE attributed salaries were reported between $400 and $155,000. While the directions clearly requested a reporting of personnel expenditures only associated with reviews, it appears many respondents devoted entire salaries to the review process.
Four colleges indicated they had hired new personnel for the State visit with salaries up to $63,500; only one institution identified a new hire for the NCATE review at a salary of $25,000. Survey directions asked only for the portion of the new employee’s salary directly attributed to the State review or its follow-up.

The costs associated with redesigning educator preparation programs to align with the new content-area standards for teachers, administrators, and school service personnel averaged slightly more than $60,000, according to the seven institutions that reported data. Again, the greatest expenditure was on personnel. One college reported $75,000 in costs for the payment of cooperating teachers, travel monies for field experiences, and “payment for field experience persons.” It is not clear how this expenditure is directly attributable to the redesign of the college’s training programs.

Approximately two of every three respondents reported costs distributed over two or three years, thereby spreading the budgetary impact over multiple years. It is interesting to note that three universities indicated they had prepared for the review more than three years in advance, but no institution declared expenditures for more than three years.

The survey results do not seem to suggest a pattern correlating costs, institutional types, the number of approved programs, full-time equivalent enrollments, or accreditation status. Some small private colleges, for instance, reported State visit expenditures of $100,000 and more, while one public university with more than 25 programs reported actual costs of $4400 and another indicated a total of $10,100. Private institutions, on average, expended about $50,000 less on the State review than public universities (i.e., $31,110 for private colleges and $80,887 for public institutions). A public university seeking NCATE initial accreditation claimed expenditures of more than $500,000.

Finally, respondents from two large public universities commented that the survey was interesting but not necessary because visit expenditures should be viewed as simply “the cost of doing business.” These representatives also noted that program redesign expenditures are a function of the continuous review and improvement of their programs.

Policy Implications

Acceptance of the NCATE/State Protocol and Partnership Agreement will require two changes in the rules. The first modification is related to the role of the State Board staff consultant and the State team chair. The second requires a change in the filing date of the Annual Report from October 1 to a range between October 1 and December 2. This latter modification is consistent with NCATE practices and allows institutions that start later in the fall term (i.e., September or later) time to prepare the document. The later date, December 2, is also the deadline for the filing of the Institutional Data Report with the State Board.
Budget Implications

As noted in the October report to the Board, the number of technical assistance efforts has increased substantially since the 2000 standards and procedures were introduced, and it is likely this trend will continue until colleges and universities have phased in the changes on their campuses, anticipated to be in 2006. The acceleration of these activities has caused a significant increase in staff time.

Legislative Action

The proposed agreement and protocol do not require legislative action. Current statutes and rules provide the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board, the legal authority to set standards, to recognize and accredit institutions, and to approve preparation programs.

Communication

The State Board must publish and distribute the final partnership agreement and protocol. The Division of Professional Preparation and Recruitment will post them on its web site and will make hard copies available to interested parties. It is recommended that the Division of Public Information develop an executive summary for the general public and the media.

Pros and Cons of Various Actions

Acceptance of the draft Partnership Agreement and Protocol will allow staff an opportunity to develop a final draft for the Superintendent’s signature. If the present version is not accepted by the Board, staff will make appropriate changes and submit a revision for Board action in December.

Superintendent’s Recommendation

The State Board should approve the proposed Partnership Agreement and Protocol and authorize its filing with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education by January 1, 2003.

Next Steps

Staff will prepare a final version of the NCATE/State Partnership Agreement and Protocol with accompanying attachments for the State Superintendent’s signature by no later than December 20, 2002. Following the endorsement of the Superintendent, the documents will be sent to NCATE before December 30, 2002.