

Original: 2039

DAN A. SURRA, MEMBER  
6 SHAWMUT SQUARE  
SOUTH ST. MARY'S STREET  
ST. MARY'S, PENNSYLVANIA 15857  
PHONE: (814) 781-6301  
TOLL-FREE: 1-(800) 348-9126

DUBOIS OFFICE:  
27 E. PARK AVENUE  
DUBOIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15801  
PHONE: (814) 375-4668

HARRISBURG OFFICE:  
HOUSE BOX 202020  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120-2020  
PHONE: (717) 787-7226

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

May 24, 2000

Chairman Jess M. Stairs  
Republican Education Committee  
Room 43A, East Wing  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Stairs,

*It is my understanding that the Education Committees of the House and Senate are currently reviewing the new Chapter 354 General Standards and Procedures for Institutional Preparation of Professional Educators. One of those changes would require a prospective teacher to maintain a 3.0 GPA to enable one to enter an education program and to graduate.*

*I was an educator for 14 years in the public school system and could have easily met these thresholds. However, I have known many people that had exemplary grades that could not teach a lick. The art and skill required to be a great teacher is not simply and only having a command of a certain subject area. I am confident there have been numerous "Teacher of the Year" recipients in school districts across Pennsylvania that would have been precluded from entering the profession if these requirements had been in place while they were attending college. I have, personally, known teachers that were B and C students that were absolutely outstanding educators and motivators of young people. I have received calls from students currently enrolled in an education curriculum that do not now meet these standards and they rightly wonder how this will impact on them and their futures. How do these proposed changes impact on them? Have they wasted their last 2 or 3 years and now can't pursue their dream of teaching?*

*The Department of Education and the Administration, for that matter, confuse me on the direction they wish to go with Teacher Certification. On one hand comes the cry for tougher standards to even be allowed to enroll in education, tougher standards to graduate in education, and permanent recertification process once one becomes a teacher. On the other, they wish to enable and even encourage individuals with no "teaching" credentials to gain an emergency certificate. As I recall, the General Assembly had to fight to insist that Charter Schools had at least 75% of their staff*

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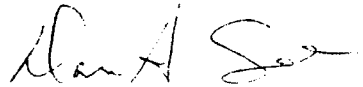
May 24, 2000  
Page 2

*certified. We are constantly being informed about the tremendous job private and parochial schools do and they have no certification requirements. I certainly am not suggesting that, I just am confused at the message being sent.*

*I urge you to take a hard look at these proposed changes and consider my thoughts. In their current form, I fear, many outstanding future educators will be kept out of the classroom to the detriment of students that never had the opportunity to have them as a teacher.*

*Thank you for your time.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan A. Surra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

*Dan A. Surra, Representative  
75<sup>th</sup> Legislative District*

*DAS/rlsb*

*cc: IRRC Board  
All House Education Committee Members  
All Senate Education Committee Members*

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cc: Harris  
Tyrrell  
Markham  
Nanorta  
Sandusky  
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**HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
TENTATIVE AGENDA  
AUGUST 3, 1999  
WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, NEW WILMINGTON, PA  
PHILLIPS LECTURE HALL - HOYT SCIENCE RESOURCES CENTER  
9:00 - 11:30 AM**

- 9:00 a.m. Call to order, remarks, welcome  
Representative Jess Stairs, Chairman
- 9:05 - 9:30 a.m. Dr. Michael Poliakoff, Deputy Secretary  
PA Department of Education
- 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. PA Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PACTE) Panel  
Dr. John Butzow, President (IUP)  
Dr. James Flynn, Emeritus (Edinboro University)  
Ms. Diana Bohl, Professor of Education (Mercyhurst College)
- 10:15 - 11:00 a.m. PA Black Conference on Higher Education  
John Shropshire, Education Policy Chairman

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**PENNSYLVANIA BLACK CONFERENCE  
ON HIGHER EDUCATION, INC.**

August 3, 1999  
House Education Hearing  
House Education Committee  
Chairman  
Hon. Rep. Jess Stairs  
Westminster College,  
New Wilmington, Pa.

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***A Critical Response to Chapter 354, The Teacher Training Initiative***

***John S. Shropshire  
Dean of Enrollment Management  
and Academic Records  
Clarion University of Pennsylvania***

***Chairperson:  
Education Policy Committee  
Pennsylvania Black Conference on  
Higher Education, Inc.***

In 1970, the Honorable Speaker of the House, K. LeRoy Irvis, convened a conference of Black college presidents, vice presidents, deans, department chairs, directors, teachers, and other political leaders and professionals. The purpose of this conference was to provide needed input in the formation of a master plan for Higher Education in Pennsylvania. PBCOHE'S role was to ensure equal education for African Americans and other minorities in the Commonwealth. We just completed our 29th Annual Conference in Pittsburgh this past spring. The mission of the PBCOHE is to provide programs and services which help ensure that the post-secondary educational needs and aspirations of Black African Americans in particular are met, and to work in concert with members of other under-represented groups in the Commonwealth. You will find enclosed in my copy of the text, a list of our present officers, including our President, Mr. William Asbury, Vice President for Student Affairs at Penn State University. You will also find a copy of our Mission Statement.

The PBCOHE applauds the effort of the Department of Education to seek ways to improve the quality of teaching and education in the Commonwealth. We sincerely believe that having better teachers in the inner city and rural areas will definitely enhance the prospects for students in these areas. After careful review of two documents, the "Teachers for the Twenty-First Century", and Proposed Rule Making #354, we have come to conclusions that in its present form, more serious problems are being left-out, aggravated, or ignored. These concerns leave us with no other opportunity than to oppose this plan. We believe this proposal will have an impact on whether or not inner city and rural students will have an opportunity to enter into the field of teaching. The intentions appear to have merit, but the potential negative effects of the proposal far outweigh the perceived results. Certainly the argument could be raised that the quest to eliminate racism and classism could be seriously derailed with the implementation of this plan. The recommended changes appear to be changes that benefit those schools and students from affluent school districts, while unduly punishing schools and students from less affluent schools. We believe education should and can be a way for upward mobility for students. Some of the proposals in Rule 354 may hamper the possibilities of these students who aspire to enter teaching. We agree that some form of competency-based exams are necessary and appropriate, but this type of testing should not favor those already experiencing academic advantages because of circumstance rather than interest. If one could show that a level playing field already existed, then we would be very happy to endorse this proposal. The fact is students from inner city and rural schools generally do not have the same rigorous academic programs, the educational support, or the finances to compete with their suburban colleagues. This is not to demean the quality of some of these really great suburban schools, the fact is we want to emulate these schools. We want to level the playing field. Unless we are able to address the economic, social, and curricular deficiencies of inner city and rural schools, these students will have limited opportunities for upward mobility.

This proposal will only maintain the status quo, not permit the upward mobility that is desired. The PBCOHE would like for you to consider the following issues and find room for them in your proposal.

1. The need for Minority teachers remains very high in the Commonwealth. Few African American students are attracted to enter into fields that traditionally have low starting salaries.

Very few are in the pipeline to continue in this worthy profession. The early studies in the colleges of education in the State System of Higher Education, show that the number of rural and Minority students would be substantially depleted with the implementation of this proposal. Over 50% of all present students would not have met the qualifications presented in the original Department proposal. This figure is much higher when considering only minorities. We would be more interested in how the Department of Education plans to attract more Minority teachers. Since prospective teachers tend to look for employment in a similar location in which they were raised, the perpetuation of the status quo of not having urban and especially inner city teachers is already a problem, implementation of this proposal will only exacerbate the problem.

2. According to the guidelines in the Teacher Training pamphlet, the criteria for admission to initial teacher preparation programs are based on multiple sources of data which include , but are not limited to, an assessment of academic proficiency, college entrance examinations, faculty recommendations, and biographical information. We would call the departments attention to a study completed by Charles Rooney titled "Test Scores Do Not Equal Merit". The subtitle of this work is Enhancing Equity & Excellence in College Admissions by de-emphasizing SAT and ACT Results. You may want to read a copy of this report done for Fair Test, The National Center for Fair & Open Testing, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, MA. 02139. I want to call some of these items from the Executive Summary to your attention today.

A . More than 275 four-year colleges and universities across the U.S., acting on the belief that "test scores do not equal merit", do not use the SAT or ACT to make admissions decisions about some part or all of their incoming freshmen classes.

B. Schools that have made standardized tests optional for admissions are widely pleased with the results. Many report their applicant pools and enrolled classes have become more diverse without any loss in academic quality. "Test score optional" policies promote both equity and excellence. This holds true at selective private liberal Arts colleges such as Bates College as well as at large public institutions as the California State University system.

C. Colleges and Universities that have moved away from using standardized tests to make admissions decisions have done so for a variety of reasons, but all have concerns about the impact of over reliance on the tests. All these schools have in common serious questions about the predictive accuracy, equity and value of standardized tests.

D. Lessons learned at the wide range of "test score optional" schools can be applied to many other institutions. These lessons include:

\* Dropping tests leads to greater diversity because the focus on the test scores deters otherwise qualified minority, low-income, first-generation, female, and other students from applying.

\* High school performance -- expressed either as grades or class rank -- is the best available screening device for applicants.

**\* Moving away from tests promotes sounder educational practices in high schools.**

**E. Institutions that still require ACT or SAT scores should review the experiences of schools that have de-emphasized the tests or explicitly made them optional in the admissions process.**

**Colleges and universities should examine their own experiences with tests and ask these questions:**

**\* Do the tests really have predictive validity at this institution?**

**\* Does that validity hold for all ethnic, age and income groups as well as for both men and women?**

**\* Do the tests add anything significant to what admissions officers already know about applicants?**

**\* Are students from under represented groups judging this institution by its test score requirements?**

**\* Is this institution sending the wrong pedagogical message to high schools by relying on narrow, three or four- hour multiple choice exams to help sort students?**

**3. All Professional Development Programs should have a strong multi cultural curriculum as a required part of their program. We cannot continue to have urban and rural school students being taught by upper middle class white teachers who are not prepared to teach these students.**

**We believe all Department of Education approved education programs should have a plan to recruit and retain minority applicants in their program. This should be a mandate from the department.**

**4. We advocate that the department require that all school districts must employ teachers who have a major in the academic discipline in which they teach. According to Dr. Claude Perkins, Dean of the College of Education at Albany State University, and former Supt. of Schools in Richmond, Las Vegas, and Kansas City . "Academic regression for students occurs most often in the middle schools. The fact that most 'out-of-field' teachers are in the middle schools is at least a strong contributing factor to this regression". In Pennsylvania, over twenty per cent of our teachers in grades 9-12 are out-of-field teaching. In our middle schools, that number is estimated to be 50% out-of-field. The department must use its influence to eliminate this problem.**

**5. We advocate that each student has at least a 2.75 GPA in order to stay and graduate from an education program. Students who come from urban and rural schools may need time for remediation and developmental courses in order to match the skills of students from more sophisticated/advantaged school districts. We are concerned that no reliable research has proven there is a correlation between GPA, SAT and "good teaching". We also advocate that the "exceptional clause" be increased to 20% and must include criteria such as rural or urban school**

districts, lower economic background, and racial diversity.

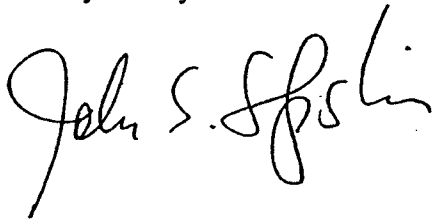
The outgoing President of the College Board, ( a native of Pennsylvania) Dr. Donald Stewart, has commented that the two key performance indicators on the SAT, are rigorous academic curriculum, and socioeconomic level of the student. Ability is not measured by the SAT or Praxis 1 and 2.

Our position is that the new proposal by the Department of Education fails to appreciate these factors listed by Dr. Stewart. The Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education believes in having quality teachers. We also offer the research skills, the teaching experience of our members, and the concern for education, especially in inner cities and rural areas; to the Department of Education in order to work together to resolve these educational problems.

In conclusion, the PBCOHE has the feeling that this is a solution looking for a problem. The latest results from ETS suggest that education majors who complete the program have basically the same SAT average score as other college graduates. The context of teaching such as poverty, single parent families, lack of financial support for schools, and out-of-field teaching tend to be the problem areas in education today. The preparation of teachers in technology, multi cultural education, and solid field experiences are the areas where improvements need to be made.

I am leaving you with a list of questions that we would appreciate an answer from the Department of Education.

I thank you for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John S. Spislin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.



**PENNSYLVANIA BLACK CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, INC.**

*JULY 14, 1999*

*Dr. Eugene Hickok  
Secretary of Education  
Department of Education  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

*Questions from the Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education, Inc.*

1. Has the Department of Education prepared an impact study if this proposal is implemented? We are especially interested in your results regarding the impact on minority and rural students.
2. The issue of preparing teachers for other states is a major concern for the PBCOHE. Does this mean that Pennsylvania colleges and universities should require or entice students to limit their mobility after completion of the degree? Can one apply the same logic to all majors such as, accounting, philosophy, or art? Do we have the right to implement policies that eliminate free choice in work location?
3. Students from the State System of Higher Education have a high passing rate of the National Teachers Examination. Is it fair to argue that the present system is working well in the training based on the results of the scores of system graduates for this exam?
4. What research provides the basis for your belief that a correlation exists between GPA, SAT or ACT, and quality teaching.
5. Do you accept the responsibility for all approved education programs having to develop recruitment and retention programs for minorities and under represented groups in the Commonwealth? Would you remove schools that did not have a successful experience at recruiting and retaining these under represented groups?

PENNSYLVANIA BLACK CONFERENCE ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION, INC.

**Executive Council 1998-2000**

**President**

William W. Asbury  
Penn State University  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
206 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814)865-0909  
(814)863-7188 (Fax)  
wwa1@psu.edu  
Sara Alterio -Staff Support\_ swa1@psu.edu  
Sue Montovino -Staff Support\_ srm13@psu.edu

**Vice/President Elect**

Patricia Hopson-Shelton  
Millersville University  
Asst. to the Pres for Social Equity  
Delaware House  
Millersville, PA 17551-0302  
(717)872-3787/3788  
(717)871-2010 (Fax)  
socequ@marauder.millesv.edu

**Secretary**

Brenda Dede  
Clarion University  
Coordinator of Graduate Studies & Director.,  
Faculty Research Dev.  
840 Wood Street  
Clarion, PA 16214  
(814)226-2223/2337  
(814)226-2039 (Fax)  
bdede@mail.clarion.edu

**Treasurer**

Tracy A. Harris  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Associate Dean of Admissions  
216 Pratt Hall  
Indiana, PA 15705  
(724)357-2756  
(724)357-6281 (Fax)  
Tracy Harris@grove.iup.edu

Central Regional Director  
Dr. Lois Waters  
Shippensburg University  
Director of Social Equity  
1871 Old Main Dr.  
Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299  
(717)532-1161  
(717)530-4001 (Fax)  
lawate@ark.ship.edu  
Penny -Staff Support- pjmowe@wharf.ship.edu

Eastern Regional Director  
Lawrence A. Dowdy  
West Chester University  
Ex. Asst to the President  
President's Office  
West Chester, PA 19383  
(610)436-6974  
(610)436-3115 (Fax)  
ldowdy@wcupa.edu  
Grace Kelly - Staff Support gkelly@wcupa.edu

Western Regional Director  
William Savage  
University of Pittsburgh  
Office of Affirmative Action  
Rm 901 William Pitt Union  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
(412)648-7860  
(412)648-7864 (Fax)  
wsavage+@pitt.edu  
office email - aaeo+@pitt.edu

Historian  
Michael Turner  
Slippery Rock University  
Academic Support Services  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
(724)738-2980  
michael.turner@sru.edu  
Mary Beth Keffalas -Staff Support  
(724)738-2009  
mary.keffalas@sru.edu

Parliamentarian (appt.)  
George A. Agbango  
Bloomsburg University  
Associate Professor & Chair,  
Department of Political Science  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
(717)389-4422  
(717)389-2094 (Fax)  
gabango@planetx.bloomu.edu

**Communication and Public Information (appt.)**

Melisande J. McCrae  
Penn State University  
Manager of Electronic Communications  
312 Old Main  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814)865-7517  
(814)863-3428 (Fax)  
mjm17@psu.edu

**Liason to PA Human Relations Commission and COBBE (appt.)**

James L. Andrews  
PA Human Relations Commission  
1101-1125 South Front Street  
Fifth Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17104-2515  
(717)783-0424  
(717)783-7703 (Fax)  
drjandrewsphd@worldnet.att.net

**Journal Editor (appt.)**

Alicia King Redfern  
Bloomsburg University  
Assistant Professor,  
Dept of Psychology  
2156 McCormick Crt  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
(717)389-4283  
(717)389-2019 (Fax)  
akredf@husky.bloomu.edu

**IEML (appt.)**

Wilson G. Bradshaw  
Bloomsburg University  
Provost  
400 E. Second Street  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815-1399  
(717)789-4308  
wbradsha@bloomu.edu

**Education Policy Committee (appt.)**

John S. Shropshire  
(address noted elsewhere)

**Robert D. Lynch Student Leadership Development Institute (appt.)**

Robert D. Lynch  
Lock Haven University  
207 Price Performance Center  
Lock Haven, PA 17745  
(570)893-2455  
(570)893-2432 (Fax)  
rlynch@eagle.lhup.edu

Scholarships Chairperson (appt.)

Judith A.W. Thomas

Lincoln University

Chair & Professor of Education

Lincoln, PA 19325

(610)932-8300 ext. 3575 (Office)

(619)932-8033 ext. 3577 (Direct)

(610)932-1085 (Fax)

vreeves@lu.lincoln.edu

Annual Conference Committee (co-chairs)

Renee Payne

Shippensburg University

Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies

1871 Old Main Drive

Shippensburg, PA 17257 (717)532-1213

rmpayn@wharf.ship.edu

Vera Cornish

Harrisburg Area Community College

Director of Institutional Diversity

One HACC Drive

Harrisburg, PA 17110

(717)780-3277

(717)231-7674 (Fax)

vccornis@hacc.edu

PBCOHE Newsletter (appt.)

John S. Shopshire

Clarion University

Dean of Enrollment Management.

Clarion, PA 16214

(814)226-2306

(814)226-2659 (Direct)

(814)226-2030 (Fax)

jshopshire@vaxb.clarion.edu

Brenda Dede (Address already noted)

Planning and Evaluation Committee (Ad Hoc) (appt.)

Lawrence A. Dowdy

West Chester University

Executive Assistant to the President

President's Office

West Chester, PA 19383

(610)436-6974

(610)436-3115 (Fax)

ldowdy@wcupa.edu

Grace Kelly - Staff Support gkelly@wcupa.edu

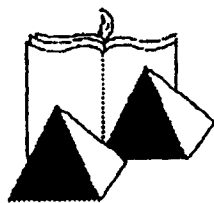
Members at Large  
Richard Arnold  
Edinboro University  
Dean of Academic Services  
100 McNerney Hall  
Edinboro, PA 16444  
(814)732-2167  
(814)732-2909 (Fax)  
arnold@edinboro.edu  
Penny - Staff Support Ptingley@edinboro.edu

Carroll J. Redfern  
Bloomsburg University  
Chairman, Comm. Disorders & Special Edu.  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
(717)389-4119  
(717)389-3980  
redfern@bloomsburg.edu

Byron A. Wiley  
State System of Higher Education  
System Director. of Social Equity  
2986 North Second St.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
(717)720-4040 (Work)  
(717)761-8839 (Home)  
(717)720-4161(Fax)  
(717)720-7041(Computer Fax) bwiley@mailgate.sshechan.edu

Francene E. Haymon  
Slippery Rock University  
Professor, Counseling Center  
107 D. Maltby Center  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
(724)738-2133  
(724)776-4313  
francene.haymin@sru.edu  
Karen - Support Staff

Legal Advisor  
Vacant  
6/16/99



## PENNSYLVANIA BLACK CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

### Mission Statement

**The mission of the Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education (PBCOHE, INC.) is to provide programs and services which help ensure that the post-secondary educational needs and aspirations of Black African Americans in particular are met, and to work in concert with members of other under-represented groups in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.**

This mission is accomplished by fully utilizing our individual and collective talents and resources. We further achieve our mission through education, research, training, and publication.

In particular, the mission provides for:

- \* Advocacy on behalf of students, faculty, and staff needs and interests.
- \* Support of personal growth and development of its membership through educational programs, networking, training in human relations, and leadership skills.
- \* Review and analysis of legislation, rulings, and reports for the impact on Black African Americans and other under-represented groups in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- \* Support of the personal growth and development of students through the Black Active Student Intercollegiate Struggles (BASICS) arm of the PBCOHE.

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**PBCOHE shares with other organizations of the Commonwealth the mission of:**

- \* Developing an educational environment that promotes and encourages desirable educational advancement for all people;

- \* Contributing to efforts in the Commonwealth to recruit, retain, and graduate students by promoting quality programs which encourage personal and academic achievement;
- \* Creating a climate that promotes and attracts students to post-secondary education and graduate programs;
- \* Developing educational strategies to promote inter-group understanding within an increasingly diverse population in the Commonwealth.

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Send any inquiries to [w1k3@psu.edu](mailto:w1k3@psu.edu)



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PAC-TE

**Proposed Content-Specific Standards  
for  
Prospective Teachers**

**A Response by the Pennsylvania  
Association of Teacher Educators (PAC-TE)  
Presented by James R. Flynn  
Chairperson, PAC-TE Teacher Certification Task Force**

**ABSTRACT**

The Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE) currently represents eighty-three of the eighty-eight institutions within the commonwealth that prepare prospective teachers. As an organization, one of PAC-TE's major objectives is to promote and foster quality teacher preparation programs. PAC-TE welcomes the opportunity to increase the quality and rigor of preparation required to become a teacher. However, it regards many of the standards currently proposed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as being regressive in nature. In fact, the proposed standards do not constitute meaningful, systematic reform and do not clearly define the process of becoming a teacher even to the extent of the standards currently in existence.

After careful examination of the proposed content-specific standards, the following pages reflect an abstracted version of PAC-TE's recommendations for revision of the proposed content-specific standards in fourteen certification areas. Our organization welcomes any opportunity to dialogue with the Department of Education on future revision of the standards.

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR ART**

**Introduction:** The proposed standards in Art Education though well intended, are not clearly portrayed and lack inclusiveness. The general headings are ambiguous and should be replaced by a general format such as the following:

**Teaching Effectiveness  
Knowledge of the Learner  
Knowledge of Content and Subject Matter  
Knowledge of Curriculum, Assessment, and Teaching Models/Strategies  
Classroom Management and Motivation Skills  
Communication Skills  
Personal/Professional Teaching Qualities**

- **The content preparation of prospective art teachers should be divided into the following areas: art production, art history, art criticism and aesthetics.**
- **The proposed standards should more clearly reflect the standards of the National Art Education Association and the Pennsylvania Art Education Association.**

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

**The participants in PACTE groups agree that the standards generally are acceptable as written but prior to final form, NAEYC's current standards should be reviewed, and the ECE standards should reflect these standards.**

### **Other input:**

- **Strengthen standards on early intervention**
- **Include the law requiring early intervention**
- **Include supervisory positions in pre-primary levels**
- **Need a standard to reflect knowledge of research in ECE**

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

**Introduction:** There has been a divergence of opinion among PAC-TE groups about how specific the standards should be for each content area, some arguing for standards which would delineate specific competencies, and others arguing for a more comprehensive and broader model. In the latter approach, it would be left to the institution to determine specific competencies. For example, in a specific competency approach, a standard for reading may specify that the graduate would need to demonstrate knowledge and application in phonics instruction, whole language instruction, literature approach, etc. In a broader approach, the standard might designate that the graduate should demonstrate knowledge and application of current theories of reading instruction. Some compromise may need to be reached between the two positions to allow some flexibility among institutions while assuring that newly certified elementary teachers have gained specific and critical skills needed as a beginning educator.

**Other salient points of impact are:**

- Cultural diversity needs to be addressed
- Relate standards to Chapter 4 competencies
- Relate standards to professional standards (NTASC, IRA, NSTA, NCTM, etc.)
- More coverage of learning theories (including inquiry and direct instruction) is needed
- Models of instruction should be added
- Add environment and ecology to the standards
- Check NCATE standards which specify standards for elementary education teachers in art, music, physical education
- Collaborative learning and other grouping strategies should be included

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**The following areas were pointed out as concerns by the PAC-TE Task Force in addressing the proposed Pennsylvania Special Education Specific Standards. This is a listing of the areas of concern, not necessarily a full discussion of the issues raised by the group.**

- **The K-12 scope of the certificate is too broad. It is very difficult to assure skills and abilities necessary for a special education major to teach effectively at the high school level. The group felt that most programs emphasized elementary preparation at the expense of high school content and methods. On the other hand, the scope could be considered too narrow by those who would like to extend coverage from birth through age 21.**
- **As a discipline Special Education might want to develop specific certification or inclusive certification for the areas of autism and gifted education.**
- **Special education programs are encouraged to use the CEC model for training and assessing the skills of the students enrolled in their teacher preparation programs. The INTASC model would also be acceptable, however, it is not as specific as the CEC model.**
- **Best Practices and the use of theoretical models representing that point-of-view are recommended in place of the terminology currently in the standards.**
- **Since so many programs have infused special education methods into their other certification areas, it may be necessary to redefine "special education."**
- **What is the relationship between undergraduate and graduate programs providing special education certification? What are the differences between these programs? How effective can graduate programs be in preparing teachers who have no undergraduate certification? How does an institution prevent a graduate program from becoming a certification mill?**
- **What is the place of the blended certificate?**
- **More intra-agency collaboration on curriculum is necessary - especially with secondary certification programs.**

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR SUPERVISORY CERTIFICATION**

**Introduction: PACTE groups who have examined the proposed “general” certificate for supervisor do not conceptually oppose the creation of such a certificate. However, it is recommended that the Pennsylvania Department of Education rewrite the Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines (CSPG) so that school districts will have a clear picture of the functions which holders of the certificate can perform.**

- **The standards should reflect what supervisors really do – analyze teaching methodologies, observe and evaluate interpersonal skills and evaluate the teachers’ ability to communicate clearly.**
  
- **The Supervisor of Curriculum and Instructional Certificate should evolve from a doctoral or at minimum, post master’s degree program. Since the proposed certificate will be more comprehensive than previously, it is recommended that the preparation for it be more extensive and in depth.**

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH/COMMUNICATIONS**

**The proposed standards for both English and Communications certificates are inadequate. They should be combined to create a comprehensive English certificate, and one which would allow teachers holding it to be assigned to any English or communications classes, 7-12. The current Certification and Staffing Policies Guidelines (CSPGS) treat the certificates this way, and the future needs of schools, large and small, suggest that this should continue. Doing this will require adding some communications content to the current English certificate and making sure that all programs offer a complete array of content within the comprehensive area. Some specific additions to the proposed English certificate, in order to facilitate this change, are listed below.**

- **Public speaking and oral communication, communication process and theory, interpersonal communication, listening, group discussion, debate, oral interpretation.**
- **Media and theatre, including knowledge of stage production and directing and creative dramatics.**
- **General knowledge of broadcast media, film, print and non-print resources, organization and management of co-curricular activities.**
- **Understanding and teaching special needs students, non-native speakers of English, and those of diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. This needs to emphasize intercultural communications, as well.**

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES, K-12**

**It is not possible to certify teachers of foreign languages who do not have the ability to speak and communicate in the target language with a great deal of effectiveness. Reading and writing the target language proficiently is not sufficient. Assessing that oral proficiency is also essential, and a concern of those who must administer these standards. Since this is a K-12 certificate, it is imperative that prospective language teachers have some field experience with children in the elementary grades. This is especially true since research tells us that children in that age range learn foreign language better and more quickly than older students. Some specific additions to the proposed Foreign Language certificate, in order to make it minimally useful, are listed below.**

- **Language proficiency equivalent to Level 3 on a nationally recognized test of language proficiency is required in reading, writing, speaking and listening in the target language. Speaking and listening in ancient languages (Latin) which are no longer spoken may be waived.**
- **Field Experiences with students K-6 as well as 7-12 should be required to enhance the possibility of learning foreign languages at the optimal time in children's development.**
- **Focus on multiple sources of the languages under study should be required, that is Spanish is spoken in several countries and cultures: Spain, Central America, Mexico, and South America. French is spoken in many parts of Africa as well as in France.**



## ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICS

**Introduction:** PACTE believes it is essential to clearly link the “fundamental concepts of mathematics necessary for a teacher at the secondary level” to the academic standards specified in Chapter 4 and to the NCTM Standards. The proposal to equate the mathematics content directly to the courses associated with the bachelor of science or bachelor of arts degrees fails to recognize the pre-service teacher’s need for instruction in the more basic mathematics principles associated with the courses taught in the secondary schools. *Knowing the Content* required for teaching the middle and secondary curricula cannot be automatically transferred from higher levels of mathematics. While a mathematics teacher should be well versed in higher mathematics to provide a sufficiently strong base of understanding, he or she must also have an understanding of the basic concepts which serve as the foundation for the discipline. The content of the college level mathematics does not generally address the core content needed in the teacher preparation curriculum. In addition to those items listed in the standards as IA and IB the following should be specified:

Plane geometry and Non-Euclidean geometry,  
Process of estimation, and  
Integration of computer and calculator technology.

In addition, a definition is needed for the terms “mathematical world view,” and “mathematical structure.” Neither term has been operationalized within the specific standards:

- Within the section identified as “Teaching the Content” there is confusion created by the phrase “...learning through multiple instructional strategies.” Listed under this stem are numerous activities which do not fall under the heading of “instructional strategies.” As an example, activities such as managing the environment, selecting materials, analyzing instructional materials, and monitoring students’ understanding do not fall under the generally accepted heading of instructional strategies. It is recommended the stem be changed to “demonstrate their competence in fostering student learning through”:

Planning of instruction . . .  
Implementing, adapting and assimilating effective instruction . . .  
Monitoring students’ understanding of . . .

- Managing the instructional environment is acknowledged to be an important issue and should be included under the heading of *Teaching the Content*, but not defined as an instructional strategy. Therefore, it is recommended this concept of management be continued under subsection II, but be placed as the last item, thus preserving the sequential flow of the instructional process, i.e., planning, implementing and monitoring (assessing). It is further recommended that this sequencing be used in all standards where the *Teaching the Content* framework is used.

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES**

**Introduction:** The proposed standards for preparing Social Studies teachers are gravely in need of rethinking and clarification. The best decision that PDE could make for the benefit of colleges that prepare teachers would be to examine NCATE general and discipline-specific standards, then either accept NCATE standards, develop the PA standards to reflect some continuity with NCATE standards, or develop totally different PA standards and declare Pennsylvania an NCATE-free state. This would streamline the accreditation process for the academic institutions and allow them to concentrate more of their efforts on educating a new generation of new professionals and less time on trying to meet conflicting and contradictory sets of standards. The new National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS/NCATE) standards which become effective in the spring semester of 1999 address what appear to be the concerns of the PDE draft standards, but do it more efficiently.

- The proposed standards do not carefully connect the social studies content knowledge to the instructional skills which should be developed.
- The proposed standards do not speak to content integration or interdisciplinary approaches to teaching the social studies.
- The proposed standards treat the social sciences as separate disciplines while requiring teacher candidates to obtain a comprehensive certificate.
- The proposed standards do not reflect the Chapter 4 standards for students in K-12 classrooms.
- Emphasis in the proposed standards continues to be on study of history of America and Europe. The need exists to include Latin American, Asian, Far East, and African history.
- Introductory courses continue to be suggested in political science, anthropology, economics, sociology, and psychology, etc. These certainly are important to comprehensive social studies. However the PRAXIS II qualifying examinations appear to require more depth than can be accommodated in a typical 120-128 credit degree program.
- Pennsylvania should seriously examine the NCSS/NCATE standards for social studies. The NCSS/NCATE standards provide the opportunity for developing interdisciplinary and discipline-specific social studies knowledge and skills. The PDE proposal does not address social studies skills developed by students, but just provides a content/laundry list of topics to be covered under each social science discipline. This approach also does not take into account the interdisciplinary nature of the social studies, not discipline-specific social sciences. This is a vital concern for any student that is working on a comprehensive certification.

## **ABSTRACT OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO PROPOSED SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR BIOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, EARTH-SPACE SCIENCE, GENERAL SCIENCE, AND PHYSICS**

**Introduction:** Principally, the review of the proposed standards attempted to match the current P. D. E. proposed standards with the standards of the National Science Teachers Association. The National Standards should be embraced by Pennsylvania. It is time to streamline the self-study/accreditation process using national standards instead of having PDE/Middle States/NCATE spinning and reinventing various wheels.

In each of the specialized areas, the meaning of the phrase “equivalent to the BA or BS is vague and/or misleading. There is no mention of the life sciences in the proposed standards for Chemistry or Physics. Why are these omitted? Under the General Science proposal what does philosophy include? Philosophy or science perhaps? In the Physics proposal, there is no mention of historical, technological or societal issues? Why these omissions?

- A major concern with these standards is the variation in specificity. For example, the ‘Knowing the Content’ portion of the standards lists a menu of topics that chemists and chemist educators may or may not agree to call ‘most important.’ There is significant detail in this portion of the proposed standards. The remainder of the standards, ‘Teaching the Content’ and ‘Teacher Professionalism’ are much more generic, that is they can be applied to the teaching of any discipline. These sections should be related to more specific subjects in the sciences.
- These proposed standards, as presented, fail to assign a value judgment in prioritizing the three components of teaching. Are all three of these components equally important? Is it OK if the teacher candidate lacks expertise in one of the components? Can excellence in ‘Teaching the Content’ balance a deficit in ‘Knowing the Content’? It should be clearly stated that ‘Knowledge of the Content’ is of primary importance to the teacher candidate. The pedagogy skills and characteristics of professionalism are important only if the candidate has a well-grounded knowledge base. This should be indicated somewhere in these standards.
- Knowing the content should be replaced with Knowledge of Content and Process of Scientific Inquiry
- The Knowing the Content standards should be replaced by the National Science Teacher’s Association Standards

- **The list of fundamental concepts is a bit confusing, both in level and inclusiveness. The fundamental concepts are presented as a list with no clarification of depth of knowledge. For example in chemistry the list is that of the introductory, overview of a freshman chemistry course and could lack the detail/depth that the preface requires.**
- **In chemistry it is especially irksome to see that someone has chosen to change the content-laden ‘periodicity’ to ‘periodically’ (I.B.). This is incorrect and should be corrected.**
- **In general, the ‘Teaching the Content’ portion of the standards are reasonable. It is recommended that the standards as written should be general standards and an additional set should be prepared for each of the science areas.**
- **In ‘Teaching the Content,’ emphasis should be placed on knowing how to chose a particular instructional methodology to teach a particular concept. Chemistry, for instance, is unique from most other disciplines in that we deal with particles that the student will probably never see; this is a special challenge in the teaching of the content. Candidates in this discipline should recognize the importance of a laboratory component to understanding the theory of chemistry. Their background in assessment should probably also be linked to this lab component.**
- **Familiarity and involvement with ACS should be clearly expected of a chemistry educator. Additionally, the science education candidates should be well versed in the resources of the National Science Teachers Association.**
- **In laboratory based sciences, legal issues specific to this discipline should be a part of this set of standards.**
- **Not only should the science teacher candidates be able to foster professional relationships with school colleagues but they should also expect to foster relationships with science professionals in universities and industries.**
- **Finally, in disciplines that sometime receive bad publicity, the high school science teacher is often the first contact with the discipline; these candidates should know how to address important issues relating the perception of science, scientists, and science teachers.**

Original: 2039

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Markham  
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Sandusky  
Legal

Chapter 354 Proposed Pennsylvania General Standards

**A Response by PAC-TE**

**Presented by John W. Butzow  
PAC-TE President**

**Abstract**

19 AUG -5 PM 3:27  
10:00 AM '99

It is clear that both the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators are both genuinely interested in improving the quality of teacher preparation programs through the development of viable standards.

After careful and continuing review and discussion with a variety of its constituencies, PAC-TE recommends a number of changes to the proposed Chapter 354:

1. More attention in the proposed standards should be devoted to the psychological components of teaching, i.e. psychology, learning instructional theory, classroom management and control.
2. More attention should be given to meaningful exit competencies rather than entrance competencies for prospective teachers. Raising exit level test scores will not, alone assure greater teacher competence.
3. Chapter 354 should include a section on Unit Governance.
4. Section 354.25 (b) should be strengthened and clarified. The appropriateness of courses for Bachelor of Arts or Sciences Degrees to those in education is not always generalizable or desirable.
5. The proposed standards should include a directive wherein all schools in basic education shall recommend only their most competent teachers to serve as cooperating teachers.
6. PAC-TE recognizes and welcomes the opportunity to provide support for novice and experienced teachers. However, the nature and extent of "ongoing support" alluded to in the proposed standards must be clarified and accompanied by appropriate funding.
7. The proposed standards must make it just as rigorous to become certified through alternate routes as through conventional routes. The current proposed standards do not clearly speak to this issue.
8. Relative to section 354.25 (3), establishes a minimum grade point average in course work exclusive of professional education courses.
9. The Ten INTASC Standards should clearly drive the monitoring and assessment of Chapter 354. It is clear from IRRC's statement to the State Board that the State Board is the agency that should clearly establish and articulate these standards.

10. PAC-TE is pleased to see that the Teacher Preparation Institutions are now directed to develop and use specific exit standards for each program. Chapter 354 should provide specific guidelines and resources to ensure that those standards are consistent across program and with the Chapter 4 standards for the assessment of children and youth.
11. PAC-TE is concerned about the statement in 354.31 (5) which allows up to 10% of candidates for admission to the program who do not meet the minimum GPA to be admitted if exceptional circumstances justify admission.

**More attention in the proposed standards should be devoted to the psychological components of teaching, i.e. psychology, learning instructional theory, classroom management and control.**

Chapter 354 is being developed to provide clearer and more rigorous standards for the preparation of teachers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The scope of the document is intended to provide the criteria for approving the programs of study of teacher preparing institutions in Pennsylvania. It is curious to note that so much of the document is focused more on those characteristics of the students that are determined by their community and family background which are not clearly the results of their experiences in higher education. The version of Chapter 49 that was recently adopted by the State Board of Education includes a set of standards (formerly called principles) 49.81 (b), (1) through (10). One of these for example (2) provides the following challenges:

*The teacher understands how all children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, career and personal development.*

This statement was borrowed by the State Board from a widely supported set of standards developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) in 1992. INTASC developed these as a set of organizing principles for actual standards that would be used to focus assessment of teacher education candidates. Standard 2 should include, in addition to this brief statement, a more detailed list of the specific elements of that area of standards. Research and practice have shown that effective educators (those who perform and thereby stimulate student learning) possess these three attributes: an understanding of content of a subject area and methods of instruction (knowledge); certain attitudes and beliefs about teaching (dispositions); and the ability to combine knowledge and dispositions so that their achievement in the classroom (performance) leads to successful student work. **PAC-TE strongly recommends that a list of knowledge, dispositions and skills that the exiting teacher education candidate would be expected to demonstrate be included in Chapter 354.** [Such a list is published with the INTASC Standards and is available on the Internet at <http://www.ccsso.org/intaspub.html>.]

PAC-TE wants to stress that in stating these in Chapter 49, the State Board laid the groundwork for an excellent revision of the teacher education process in Pennsylvania. In developing its regulations for teacher education programs, in Chapter 354, the State Board does not follow through with the idea of general standards. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to reconsider the structure of Chapter 354 to include the entire set of knowledge, dispositions and skills as published in the Model Standards developed by INTASC.** The State of Indiana recently completed the redevelopment of their general and specific new teacher standards using the INTASC Model Standards. PAC-TE strongly recommends that the State Board review the Indiana Professional Standards Board work as it continues to revise Chapter 354 into a true set of general standards. [The Indiana Professional Standards Board maintains a web page at <http://www.state.in.us/psb/>.]

**More attention should be given to meaningful exit competencies rather than entrance competencies for prospective teachers. Raising exit level test scores will not, alone assure greater teacher competence.**

In establishing a set of academic averages as eligibility indicators for students to officially join a teacher preparation program after the completion of three semesters, the State Board seems to rest its case on quality. There is mention of exit standards enabling the candidate to teach to the Chapter 4 standards but little else is specified. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to reconsider these position and place clear exit standards that follow from the INTASC Model Standards for all teacher education programs.** Those standards should then be used to assess the individual candidate's suitability to be recommended

for a state certificate as well as an indication of the ability of the institution to provide the student the necessary knowledge, disposition and skill needed to become a beginning teacher.

**Chapter 354 should include a section on Unit Governance.**

Our review of Chapter 354 indicates that there is a definition of the Unit that provides the teacher education program for each Teacher Preparation Institution but the document does not make clear what the responsibilities of the Unit should be. In reviewing similar documents from other states and national accreditation agencies, PAC-TE finds that state general standards usually include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the teacher education Unit. The following are typical statements used for evaluation:

- (1) The Unit has responsibility and authority in such areas as recommending faculty selection criteria, tenure and promotion criteria for teacher educators as well as developing criteria for retention and recruitment of faculty who will be involved in teacher education.
- (2) The Unit documents that it operates as a professional community and has the institutional responsibility, authority and responsibility to develop, administer, evaluate and revise all professional development programs.
- (3) The Unit provides professional education programs that are well organized, unified and coordinated to ensure fulfillment of its mission and application of its exit criteria.
- (4) The Unit actively involves its faculty, candidates and its cooperating educators from basic education in the unit's policy making and/or advisory bodies.
- (5) The Unit provides for the professional development of its faculty and cooperating educators.

**Section 354.25 (b) should be strengthened and clarified. The appropriateness of courses for Bachelor of Arts or Sciences Degrees to those in education is not always generalizable or desirable.**

In developing Chapter 354, The State Board chose to emphasize specific academic majors rather than focus on the needed academic content as part of the knowledge sections of general and specific standards. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to revise 354.25 (b) to state the specific competencies needed for teaching each grade level or special field or academic subject.** INTASC for example has developed a model set of exit standards for mathematics teacher candidates. It is not clear that the BA or BS degree in content offered by the institution can function as an effective safeguard to ensure that candidates have learned all the academic content required to teach a specific grade level or subject. In some instances there may not be a relevant BA or BS degree to use for comparison sake. Since the content of academic degrees vary so much from institution to institution, a much clearer set of expectations would be provided by clear knowledge standards. Then the institutions could use whichever academic major it chooses to designate for the specific program rather than try to follow program inclusion guidelines that are not clearly linked to either the standards stated in Chapter 49 or those in Chapter 4.

**The proposed standards should include a directive wherein all schools in basic education shall recommend only their most competent teachers to serve as cooperating teachers.**

Section 354.27 (2) sets forth directives about how the teacher education unit will establish agreements with public schools and cooperating professionals. This section should also provide conditions for participation by local school entities in teacher education programs. The teacher education unit is expected to abide by specific criteria for selecting and retaining its faculty. The cooperating schools are not so obliged by Chapter 354 to do so for cooperating teachers. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to include a requirement in 354.27 for criteria for selection of cooperating teachers.**



**PAC-TE recognizes and welcomes the opportunity to provide support for novice and experienced teachers. However, the nature and extent of "ongoing support" alluded to in the proposed standards must be clarified and accompanied by appropriate funding.**

Section 354.27 (c) states, "The unit shall provide ongoing support to novice educators in partnership with public schools during their induction period, including observation, consultation and assistance." It is not clear how much of this assistance shall be provided or what, if any, geographical limit is to be imposed on the institution. This mandate could prove to be very costly to an institution of higher education that would in turn receive no income to support the activity. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to develop an alternate statement in which teacher preparation institutions are assisted by the state in providing these important services to novice teachers in a consortial structure.**

**The proposed standards must make it just as rigorous to become certified through alternate routes as through conventional routes. The current proposed standards do not clearly speak to this issue.**

PAC-TE as an organization does not oppose the development of alternative routes to certification as long as those routes are designed to include the same rigorous standards that are applied to persons preparing for teaching using the traditional route. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to put a statement to this effect into Chapter 354.**

**Relative to section 354.25 (3), establishes a minimum grade point average in course work exclusive of professional education courses.**

We have already stressed the need for consistency between Chapters 354 and 49. Chapter 49 clearly sets forth the need to use standards for the assessment of exiting students to determine if the preparing institution should recommend them for certification. We have argued that the grades provided by one institution would not be the same at another institution. The use of grade point average therefore does not guarantee a desirable level of knowledge in content for prospective teachers. **PAC-TE urges the State Board to remove the reference to grade point average and substitute in its place assessments based on the 10 program standards.**

**The Ten INTASC Standards should clearly drive the monitoring and assessment of Chapter 354. It is clear from IRRC's statement to the State Board that the State Board is the agency that should clearly establish and articulate these standards.**

PAC-TE has pointed out consistently in this process of establishing general standards that there needs to be clear, specific statements of the standards for candidate and program assessment stated in Chapter 354. We have further argued that it is essential that the very same standards stated in Chapter 49.81 (b) be those used for this purpose. In addition, in previous sections of this statement, PAC-TE strongly recommends the Model Standards developed by INTASC be employed in their entirety as a statement of general standards for the preparation of professional educators.

**PAC-TE is pleased to see that the Teacher Preparation Institutions are now directed to develop and use specific exit standards for each program. Chapter 354 should provide clear guidelines and resources to ensure that those standards are consistent across programs and with the Chapter 4 standards for the assessment of children and youth.**

Most state certification processes provide both general standards and specific standards for each program of educator preparation. Chapter 354, as it stands, uses statements about academic averages and

requirements that students in teacher preparation take the same courses as others in the comparable academic major instead of stating specific standards for the individual teacher education program. Chapter 354 also specifies that teachers be prepared to enable students to achieve the standards set forth in Chapter 4. PAC-TE urges the State Board to develop a clearer method to specify the content related exit competencies of candidates for certification. PAC-TE further urges the State Board to use standards developed by such learned societies as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics as a basis for the development of our Pennsylvania Teacher Standards.

**PAC-TE is concerned about the statement in 354.31 (5) which allows up to 10% of candidates for admission to the program who do not meet the minimum GPA to be admitted if exceptional circumstances justify admission.**

Our concern here is that the 10% rule is a potential opportunity for institutions to be tempted to engage in discrimination. Authors of this draft document have made statements to the effect that the 10% rule is there to assist institutions to make provisions for majors where the GPA's rarely reach 3.0. Variances could also be made for students who are recruited into the preparation institution from secondary schools that may not have strong academic standards. Variances could also facilitate retaining students from a variety of races and ethnic backgrounds. Our view is that institutions cannot have double standards, one standard for one group and another one for other groups. The existence of this rule and the qualifier that it may be used in "exceptional circumstances" is direct admission that the 3.0 GPA is not a good standard for program admission.

We have another concern with the 3.0 GPA admission standard. We understand that students from certain environments do not achieve high GPA's during their initial years of college or university life. That is because their preparation for higher education was not strong and their family and community background did not strongly support schooling. These students generally have a very difficult time making the same level of progress through college as other students. By the third semester, such a student would not have a GPA indicative of her/his ultimate level of college/university achievement. **PAC-TE urges the State Board not to create artificial impediments to the opportunity of underrepresented groups to gain admission to teacher education programs.**

Original: 2039

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**Testimony of Michael B. Poliakoff, Deputy Secretary for Postsecondary and  
Higher Education**

**Pennsylvania Department of Education**

**House Education Committee**

**August 3, 1999**

99 AUG - 5 PM 9:27

Representative Stairs, Representative Colafella and Members of the House Education Committee:

On behalf of Secretary of Education Eugene Hickok, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss Proposed Rulemaking 22 PA Code Chapter 354. Approved unanimously by the State Board of Education in March 1999, these proposed regulations incorporate the best practices of other states and the guidance of educational research to create a system that will produce teachers fully capable of guiding their students to meet Pennsylvania's academic standards.

Under Chapter 49.13 of the Pennsylvania Code, the State Board of Education and the Secretary are responsible for providing standards for the guidance of teacher preparation programs in the Commonwealth. The existing Standards, now 14 years old, are in serious need of revision. We believe Chapter 354 will provide a rigorous course of study for individuals preparing to apply for secondary and K-12 content area certificates. These rigorous, new requirements will help ensure that only Pennsylvania's best and brightest enter the classroom as 21<sup>st</sup> Century teachers.

Like Pennsylvania's academic standards for students, which are referenced throughout Chapter 354, the proposed Chapter 354 standards are clear, measurable and concise. They are applicable to all 90 teacher preparation programs in the Commonwealth.

Raising the bar for future teachers complements Gov. Ridge's ongoing commitment to raise the bar of achievement for Pennsylvania students. We believe teachers who will help their students attain the Pennsylvania academic standards must model academic excellence themselves. And, the institution providing their training must prepare them to be able and willing to guide students towards achieving these standards.

To ensure that those seeking to teach our children are among the highest achievers in the college classroom, the proposed Chapter 354 includes the following key provisions:

- After a two-year phase-in period, all candidates will have to maintain a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) in the discipline related to the educational speciality the candidate intends to teach;
- Candidates must fulfill the same general education (liberal arts) courses as their classmates who seek a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree;

- Candidates for certification must fulfill all the required core courses and required elective courses in the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science major academic area the candidate intends to teach. In other words, a prospective high school biology teacher would take the same courses that a candidate for the Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in biology would take;
- All prospective teachers must complete at least six semester hours of college level English and college-level mathematics;
- Candidates may not be formally admitted to a teacher preparation program before they have completed 48 hours of college-level study, and have met high GPA admission requirements.
- Teacher preparation programs must avoid duplication and repetition of course work and create a program that can be completed within four years of initial enrollment at the college or university;
- Teacher preparation programs must work collaboratively with public schools to design and implement student teaching, to help in induction programs, and to develop and implement appropriate alternative certification programs;
- Teacher education programs must develop field experience for teachers in training, so that candidates can experience and understand the challenges of the teaching profession throughout their training; and
- Institutions must make available to students, the Department and the State Board information concerning the placement of its graduates.

The positive response of educational leaders in Pennsylvania and across the nation to these proposed standards is important to note. The proposed Chapter 354 received the endorsement of the professional Standards and Practices Commission, a group with whom I had met five times in the preceding year to discuss the new standards as they were being drafted. In addition, Dr. James McCormick, chancellor of the State System of Higher Education, endorsed the reforms contained in Chapter 354, when they were first announced as part of Governor Ridge's Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative in December 1997. The State System remains the largest trainer of teachers in Pennsylvania and understands these challenging new standards provide the opportunity to maintain its traditional leadership in teacher preparation.

The proposed Standards earned the endorsement of Dr. Edwin Delattre, dean of the School of Education at Boston University, as well as Dr. Allen Splete, president of the Council of Independent Colleges. As the press clippings packet you received demonstrates, the response throughout Pennsylvania to these proposed new standards has been strongly positive.

Underlying Chapter 354 is the recognition that there is an important relationship between academic performance and teaching capability. Numerous studies conclude that teachers with strong academic histories have a positive impact on their students. Studies in Texas and Alabama demonstrate that teachers with higher standardized test scores produced students with higher test scores. A study in Georgia showed that high GPA is an excellent predictor of classroom teaching skills and effectiveness.

A California study shows a stunning correlation between low GPA, failure on licensure exams, and most importantly, poor peer assessment of teaching skills. Teacher candidates admitted to the program as “exceptional,” i.e., having failed to meet the admissions requirements (largely GPA based), were often rated as deficient in their student teaching by their supervisory teachers in key areas such as speech, academic ability, attitude and independent thinking.

We also believe that requiring candidates to achieve a 3.0 in both the content area and professional education courses will significantly control the danger of grade inflation. State and national research indicates that there are consistently more “A’s” awarded in colleges of education than in other schools within institutions of higher education. We believe by separating the requirements for candidates to achieve a 3.0 in both the content area and professional education courses, Chapter 354 will significantly control the danger of further grade inflation.

I do think that it is important to note that some institutions in Pennsylvania have proactively embraced the 3.0 standard or similar quality measures. The Erie School District, for example, will only hire teachers who graduate with a 3.0 GPA or better. Penn State University has significantly raised its GPA requirement for admission to the college of education. Several of our internship programs have set GPA entrance requirements ranging from 2.8 to 3.0.

Beyond the Commonwealth, New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman has called for a “B” average as the minimum GPA required for new teachers. Connecticut, a bellweather for teacher excellence and high NAEP scores, requires a “B” average for admission to teacher education programs at the public universities, and a combined minimum SAT score of 1100 to apply for certification.

Again, when we look at other states we can see that some expressly exclude a major professional education from fulfillment of certification requirements. What has emerged in educational research is a strong positive correlation between a teacher’s preparation in the subject he or she teaches and the performance of that teacher’s pupils. Likewise, a survey performed by the National Center for Education Information reveals that 73 percent of the practicing teachers surveyed found their content-area courses “very valuable.” Only 37 percent found their education methods courses “very valuable.”

For this reason, in addition to a rigorous GPA requirement, the proposed Chapter 354 standards will challenge potential teachers by requiring them to fulfill the same general education (liberal arts) courses as their classmates who seek the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science

degree. Future teachers will have to demonstrate success in undergraduate liberal arts and general studies courses *before* being able to enroll in teacher preparation programs.

Although candidates are free to take education courses from their first semester on, they cannot be formally admitted to a teacher education program until they have completed a minimum of 48 semester hours. For admission, after a two-year phase in, candidates would need either a 3.0 GPA or a 2.8 GPA with scores on the PRAXIS I/Basic Skills Exam of 178 in Mathematics, 178 in Reading, and 174 in Writing. If they meet the admission requirements at that time, they may be admitted; or, if there are still deficiencies, they can strengthen their academic skills and seek formal admission to the teacher preparation program at a later time. Moreover, exceptional candidates - up to 10 percent of the total group - can be admitted without meeting the GPA requirement. Thus, Chapter 354 contains sufficient flexibility to meet different learning and development styles, while still requiring the college of education to seek the best and the brightest candidates. I should note that it was the State System of Higher Education, working closely with Department staff, that recommended the PRAXIS I test score alternative, and the Department is grateful for this guidance.

The teachers of the future must not only be prepared with a foundation in pedagogical theory, they also must have a firm understanding of the subject they intend to teach. As Kati Haycock of the Educational Trust stated, "You can't teach what you don't know."

We believe sustaining a respectable GPA and completing academic content courses will better prepare teacher candidates to excel on their teaching exams. Under the proposed Chapter 354, those seeking to teach in a Pennsylvania classroom also must be able to demonstrate proficiency on certification exams.

Questions on the PRAXIS II exam, which Pennsylvania and many other states use, are designed so that a minimally qualified candidate has a 50 percent chance of getting each question correct. There is no penalty for guessing, as there is on the SAT. Prior to this Administration, our passing scores on some exams ranged between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> percentile of scores nationwide. Even with these low qualifying scores, some of our colleges of education had passing rates as low as 34.1 percent on the elementary education test and 46 percent on the General Knowledge exam. If performance on these simple exercises is so weak, it indicates a problem in candidate quality that must be remedied by higher admission standards and higher academic standards within the program.

Moreover, we believe that it is a grave injustice to well-meaning and earnest students to admit them to programs, take their time and tuition money, knowing full-well that their chances of achieving licensure are minimal. Such a system would serve to keep teacher education enrollments high and justify more faculty positions and salaries, but do grave harm to students. Pennsylvania should not set itself up for the embarrassment that Massachusetts suffered when over half of its candidates failed the licensure exam.

In addition to providing academic rigor and ensuring that future teachers receive a well-

rounded preparation program, the proposed Chapter 354 increases the accountability of those schools preparing future teachers.

The standards require teacher preparation programs to avoid duplication and repetition of course work and create a program that can be completed within four years of initial enrollment at the college or university. There are many strong teacher preparation programs from which students regularly graduate within four years. It is even more incumbent upon universities subsidized by taxpayers to design teacher preparation programs that can be completed within four years.

Chapter 354 requires that institutions make available to students, the Department and the State Board information concerning the placement of its graduates. We have heard arguments from the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PACTE) that state government should not discourage students from training to be teachers - including students at publicly funded universities even in certification areas where the oversupply makes it certain that a large portion of the newly certified teachers will not find jobs in the Commonwealth. Chapter 354 now requires that prospective students, and the public, be fully informed. **These provisions are especially important when you consider that certification of new teachers in virtually all areas - including mathematics and natural science - exceeds new hires by a factor of at least two to one. In elementary education that factor is closer to six to one.**

In examining grades at public universities, we note that even in the hard sciences, roughly 40-50 percent of the grades are "A's" or "B's." Seeking content area experts and training them with classroom skills through alternative certification seems an excellent opportunity to maintain the academic standards for entry into the teaching profession. Studies in California and Texas show that alternative certification has proven itself a highly effective tool for bringing larger numbers of minority candidates of excellent academic and pedagogic skills into the classroom.

In closing, I believe that the proposed Chapter 354 effectively addresses what we can do to ensure that Pennsylvania's best and brightest find their way to school classrooms. The opportunity to be a school teacher is not an entitlement -- high standards for teachers will help provide the children of this Commonwealth with the quality education they deserve. Pennsylvania, which has at this time a substantial oversupply of teachers, has the rare opportunity to concentrate on the quality of its new teachers. Chapter 354, based on best practice and well-documented research, will ensure that every newly certified teacher will have both the content-area and the teaching skills to be a model of teaching for the 21st century.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss the proposed Chapter 354. Secretary Hickok and I look forward to working with you on these standards as they make their way through the independent regulatory review process. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

## Tests for teachers A26

*Gov. Ridge's proposals make sense as far as they go*

**G**ov. Ridge wants to make sure that the state's teachers, already among the best paid in the country, are also among the best prepared to do the job.

To that end, he has proposed higher standards for certification. His proposals generally make sense as far as they go. But do they go far enough?

Under his guidelines, a student would have to make better grades in college and score higher on standardized teaching tests in order to be certified. That's easy to endorse.

But it is a step short if prospective teachers are getting better grades in programs that themselves fall short. Teachers face difficult challenges, particularly in poor, urban districts where the obstacles are enormous and so are the stakes.

Just a generation ago, school failure did not necessarily lead to a life of poverty. Now it does. Teachers today must reach all students. That has required a shift in teacher training, but it is a shift not all colleges have made.

While educators have plenty of experience with "best practices," and pockets of impressive teaching and learning already exist around the country, there is good evidence that teacher preparation courses do not consistently relay that information. We hope the governor will initiate a move to upgrade teacher training programs as a fundamental step toward educational improvement in the state.

That's more a flag of what remains to be

done than it is a criticism of the steps the governor proposes now.

Requiring prospective teachers to maintain a 3.0 rather than a 2.5 grade point average strikes us as eminently reasonable. And requiring a higher score on the national standardized teacher exams is also within bounds.

The governor would also mandate that a secondary school teacher fulfill the requirements for a major in the subject he plans to teach. "You can't teach what you don't know," is the governor's justification for this goal, and he is on target.

The only change that is encountering significant resistance at this point is a proposal to allow men and women who did not major in education to go through an apprenticeship for a year and then apply for certification. Under current regulations they would have to go back to school to take the education courses needed for certification.

Plenty of people make midlife career changes. And those who want to teach the things they have spent years *doing*, should not necessarily have to go back to undergraduate school to get a degree in education. But they do have to be able to teach. And a brilliant career in another field is no guarantee of that.

The governor is right to look for some alternative certification process for these cases, but it must be rigorous enough to assure that the candidate not only knows his subject matter, but also understands a little of the intricacies of a child's mind, and how to reach it.



# Fair Standards For Teachers

## Public Deserves Accountability Inherent in High Standards

**G**ov. Tom Ridge's decision to seek higher standards for the state's teachers does justice to students and taxpayers by increasing the accountability of school districts and individual teachers.

The proposal, which does not require legislative approval, would require prospective teachers of grades seven through 12 to major in the subjects they plan to teach, rather than only in education. Prospective teachers would have to maintain a B average and secondary teachers would have to score higher than the national average on a standardized certification test.

### **BEWARE GRADE INFLATION**

Requiring a B average is a good idea as long as a B remains a B. Since colleges need high placement rates of graduates in order to recruit new students, it is likely that a B average will be easier to attain under the new standards so that as many graduates as possible will be qualified for employment. Still, the change would eliminate the state's distinction of being one of few that allow students with C-plus averages who score below the national average on the test to become teachers.

Ridge also proposed an "alternative certification" method, by which non-education majors could enter the teaching ranks after serving a supervised one-year internship.

The Pennsylvania State Education Association, the state's largest teachers' union, endorsed the higher standards while expressing reservations about alternative certification. There is no reason to believe, however, that someone with a graduate degree in a subject cannot be an effective teacher.

The union claimed that the initiative contradicts charter school regulations, which exempt from certification up to 25 percent of a charter school's faculty. Accountability is inherent in the charter school law, however, because it provides for the easy dismissal of incompetent teachers. There is little distinction between good and bad teachers in the public education system.

### **BANG FOR THE BUCK**

In addition to potentially improving the quality of education, the higher standards also provide some assurance to taxpayers that the quality of teaching justifies teachers' high salary and benefit packages (now an average of about \$58,000 per teacher in Scranton, for example).

In districts where teachers are hired by professional qualifications rather than politics, most new teachers meet the new standards because of market conditions. More than 11,000 people were certified by the state in 1996, but only 2,000 were hired. That means that school districts can choose those with the highest test scores, college and on the certification test.

Higher uniform standards will be helpful, however, to maintain uniform quality across the state.

# New teacher hiring standards

**T**he common perception of teachers unions — created more by politicians than reality — goes along these lines: Teachers unions are essentially bands of uncooperative, entrenched educators devoted more to self-interests than student interests.

This perception, which on certain issues could certainly be applied to the national teacher associations, is more often than not a completely inaccurate portrayal of the majority of local teachers unions.

Happily, this is the case with the Erie Education Association and its state partner, the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

Both are firmly on board with the Erie School Board's recent decision to raise the standards for new teaching hires.

"I see nothing wrong with us continuing to improve ourselves," EEA President Mary Lou DeLuca said af-

## OUR OPINION

ter the school board approved Superintendent of Schools James Barker's recommendation on Oct. 14.

The new standards, which start the next school year, are:

— New teaching hires at the elementary, middle and high schools must have at least a 3.0 grade-point average.

— New teaching hires at these same grade levels must have a masters degree or be enrolled in a masters program.

— New teaching hires must have experience in urban schools.

— New teaching hires must have specialized certification in specific areas like social studies, reading, math or science.

The new grade-point average standard, while unofficially enforced in many school districts, is ex-

tremely useful in terms of reasserting the Erie district's commitment to attracting the best teaching candidates.

The 3.0 plateau is also a signal to parents and students that B's are the minimum standard in the Erie School District.

As for the masters degree, graduate school education is the proper bar to aim at when seeking new teachers.

But the district did leave some wiggle room for individual cases.

For instance, if an otherwise qualified fortysomething teacher with broad experience at Philadelphia parochial school system applied without a masters degree on a resume, this candidate could be considered.

Perhaps the most critical element in these new hiring standards is the urban teaching experience requirement.

For too long, far too many mostly

young teachers were allowed to teach in cities without any prior exposure to an urban school environment.

This practice served neither the interests of the students nor the teachers placed in this situation.

Eliminating the possibility of this occurring again is a wise and proper move which will lead to better teachers and better students.

Finally, we applaud both Barker's, the school board's and especially the EEA's decision to move forward on these new standards.

For too long, teachers have been the whipping boy and girl for opportunistic politicians, snide columnists and and snooty op-ed writers.

Supporting higher standards — and in effect weeding out unqualified or unprepared teaching candidates — will help build and improve the vital partnership between student, teacher and school district.

## EDITORIALS

## Ridge is working overtime to improve teacher quality

Gov. Tom Ridge really is determined to improve public education in Pennsylvania. When his "school choice" plan did not fly, he did not quit. He shifted emphasis to an impressive charter school program. Now he wants to reward high-quality students and ensure high-quality teachers.

As he announced his determination to run for a second term last week, the governor proposed "Pennsylvania Achievement Awards" as special designations on diplomas given to high-school graduates who score highest on statewide assessment tests.

The first awards would be given to students who start high school this fall — the Class of 2002.

A more far-reaching benefit will come from Ridge's proposal to increase academic requirements for future teachers. He has instructed the Department of Education to raise the minimum grade point average that prospective teachers must maintain in the discipline they plan to teach from 2.5 to 3.

Ridge also has asked the State Board of Education to approve a proposal that teachers fulfill the same course requirements in their teaching subject as their peers. In other

words, prospective math teachers would have to take as many math courses as someone majoring in math with another career in mind.

In addition, the governor wants the state board to consider an alternative certification plan for talented college graduates who are not education majors. They could be certified after passing appropriate exams and serving an intensive one-year apprenticeship in the public schools.

A fourth element of Ridge's plan would require that prospective teachers score substantially higher on the National Teachers' Exam or PRAXIS exam before being certified.

Stiffer requirements for teachers should be supported by all parents, teachers and the Pennsylvania State Education Association. Such requirements should lead to better teachers and better education.

Ridge is smart to press the public schools. Competition from private and parochial schools, homeschooling and new charter schools is growing. Raising the standards of public education is the best way to ensure that those schools will be able to produce students of equal academic ability.

# Ridge wants only the best in classroom

Press Enterprise 12/16/97

Gov. Tom Ridge wants to raise the bar for college students who aspire to teaching jobs in Pennsylvania's public schools.

This is good news for students and taxpayers.

"It should no longer be

acceptable for

average stu-

dents — or those that fail the certification exams — to become teachers in Pennsylvania," Ridge said. "With these new reforms, only the highest achievers in our college classrooms will be Pennsylvania's 21st century teachers. They will demonstrate their success in undergraduate work before they enroll in teacher-preparation programs. And they will take challenging, content-rich courses in the disciplines they intend to teach.

"Just as Pennsylvania is establishing high academic standards for public school students, it is time for those who intend to become classroom teachers — one of our most important professions — to also meet higher standards," Ridge said.

The governor's predecessor, Bob Casey, argued that a better starting salary and higher wages would attract the best and brightest students to the head of the classroom.

Whether he was right remains open to debate.

But there will be little room for argument about the

effects of what Ridge proposes. Students in training to be teachers will either meet these new standards or not be given their state certificate:

■ Upon acceptance into a college of education, prospective teachers would be required to maintain a 3.0 grade point average in the discipline they intend to teach. The current minimum is 2.5.

"Teaching is among the most important professions in our society," Ridge said Monday. "C-plus is not good enough."

■ Prospective secondary school teachers would be required to fulfill the major requirements for the disciplines they intend to teach. For example, prospective math teachers will be required to fulfill the same content-rich course requirements as their peers majoring in math.

"It's a common-sense proposition: you cannot effectively teach what you don't know," Ridge said.

■ Talented, qualified college graduates would be allowed to obtain state certification through apprenticeships or internship programs. Candidates who pass the appropriate exams would be able to engage in a one-year, intensive apprenticeship under the supervision of an experienced teacher or principal.

■ Prospective teachers would be required to score substantially higher on the National Teachers' Exam (NTE) or PRAXIS exam before receiving certification.

"An individual could now score the equivalent of an F on one of these exams and still be able to teach in a Pennsylvania classroom," Ridge said. "That is unacceptable."

Indeed.

Pennsylvania Education Secretary Eugene W. Hickok said that the Education Department will move ahead with raising the minimum passing scores on its own authority. The other three proposals must be approved by the State Board of Education.

They're good ideas. Here's hoping the board doesn't drag its feet.

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[Op-Ed Columns by Susan D. Haas]

## Ridge plan for teachers offers promise

December 19, 1997

The education program of Gov. Tom Ridge took a step forward in prestige this week with his proposal to upgrade the requirements for becoming a teacher in a public secondary school. Demanding more of teachers, like the law enabling public charter schools and the new standards proposed in June for student achievement, is an improvement that can make schools better across the state.

Three changes are being proposed.

New teachers will be required to achieve higher college grades both in education courses and in their area of specialty -- chemistry or social studies, for instance. Instead of the current grade-point average of 2.5 (a C plus) prospective teachers will need a 3 average, or a solid B. Those standards will apply both to students seeking admission to colleges' education departments and those matriculating toward a teaching degree.

New teachers also will be required to receive higher scores on a national standardized test known as the National Teachers Exam. Prospective Pennsylvania teachers now can be certified with scores below the national average. The new standard will be somewhere above the national average. It will be up to Secretary of Education Eugene Hickok and the state Board of Education to decide what the required score will be.

The third change is an alternative certification program. It would allow school districts to grant teaching certificates to college graduates who do not follow the traditional college program to an educational degree and certification. After a yearlong apprenticeship with a veteran teacher, a professional person who has extensive experience in accounting, for instance, could teach business-related courses.

None of the changes would apply to teachers who now hold certification. So far, the Pennsylvania State Education Association, which represents about 100,000 teachers, is supporting Mr. Ridge's reforms regarding standards for initial certification. However, the PSEA

is objecting to the alternative certification proposal.

Last year, Pennsylvania certified about 11,000 new teachers. About 2,000 of them got jobs. So, the union's concerns about expanding the pool of candidates competing for jobs is understandable. But when viewed from a perspective of what is best for the public schools, alternative certification makes sense. The new charter school law, after all, allows the new schools to use teachers who do not hold traditional certification. Other states, including New Jersey, have successful alternative certification programs in place. It should be given a chance in Pennsylvania, as well.

Mr. Ridge is a governor who has spent a lot of political capital over the last three years on attempts to steer money away from the public schools via dubious voucher proposals. It is good to see him getting behind programs that can make the public schools better, as well.

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# COMPETENCY

Higher certification standards are fine,  
but real issue is over existing educators

While Gov. Tom Ridge's move to raise the standard required of new teachers has merit, the real issue is the qualifications of existing teachers, not new ones.

In Pennsylvania, the competition for the relative few teaching jobs available is so keen that school districts can literally pick the cream of the crop. More than 11,000 new teachers were certified last year by the state, but only 2,000 were hired.

Most school districts have many more times the number of qualified applicants for teaching positions than openings. As one education professor warns prospective education majors, getting a teaching job is so competitive that for those doing the hiring, it comes down to who crossed all their "t's" and dotted all their "i's."

So, in announcing that he will administratively raise the bar for teacher certification by increasing the passing score on the National Teachers' Exam above the national average and require prospective teachers to achieve at least a "B" grade in the subject area in which they plan to teach, Ridge is merely moving the standard where it already operates, for the most part.

The governor also will require teaching majors to earn the full range of credits in their field of knowledge expected of any other student seeking a degree in that subject area. Such a standard already operates in the State System of Higher Education, a prima-

ry training ground for Pennsylvania teachers.

None of this is to suggest that higher official standards are not appropriate. To the contrary, it ensures that a higher standard will be enforced across the state and it makes it clear that demonstrated competence in a field of knowledge is absolutely essential for anyone planning to teach that subject.

But the test of competence needs to be applied not merely to new teachers, but to current teachers. This is one of the areas where our schools are falling short, to what extent we doubt that anyone actually knows.

How important are teacher qualifications? A New York study found that teacher qualifications accounted for 90 percent of the difference in students' reading and mathematics scores across high and low-scoring schools.

It isn't fair to today's students and taxpayers to rely on attrition to replace those teachers who don't know the subject matter as well as they should or have not kept their knowledge current. There are too many young, eager and highly competent teachers waiting for openings for the state to tolerate teachers who don't belong in a classroom.

Ridge said he will likely address the issue of current teachers in the new year. We urge him to be aggressive in doing so by requiring a demonstration of competency that is equivalent to what is required of new teachers. Pennsylvania's children deserve no less.

## ANOTHER VIEW

By Barbara Diamant

# Only way to improve education is to raise bar for educators

**BETHLEHEM** — Teachers take a lot of abuse. Cranky parents, unruly students, and administrators out-of-touch with the realities of classroom teaching can make their professional lives miserable. It's a vocation that shares Rodney Dangerfield's gripe, "I don't get no respect." Now, veteran teachers face another challenge: a new generation of teachers that might think Dangerfield uses good grammar.

The teaching profession is failing to attract our best students. Last summer, the Massachusetts Board of Education announced 59 percent of its 2,000 prospective teachers failed its first teacher certification test. It decided to lower passing to 44 percent, as reported June 27 in *The Morning Call*. But almost immediately, Massachusetts Gov. Paul Cellucci stepped in to maintain the higher passing grade. Gov. Cellucci, quoted by *The New York Times* on July 2, had

Silber blames schools of education for lacking rigor. He claims, "Nowhere are standards lower than in schools of education." The current average combined S.A.T. score for potential teachers is 964; the national average is 1,016.

This represents a change from a generation ago. Thirty years ago, teaching attracted educated women because they didn't have many other career options. Today, the best and brightest college students are being courted by a robust job market in business and industry. Those who excel academically head for fields in technology, engineering, medicine and law. The Allentown-based National Association of Colleges and Employers released a report in late July confirming that starting salaries for college graduates are on the rise and job offers abound (*The Morning Call*, July 22). Why would graduates choose teaching, a career which has a reputation for being poorly paid and poorly respected?

## Agenda '98

### Excellent Public Schools

spoken to parents: "Every parent I spoke to said "We want high standards."

One would-be teacher interviewed in *The New York Times* article denounced the decision to maintain the higher passing grade as political. He commented that when a teacher gives a test and the whole class does poorly, it's usually the test that's faulty.

But the complaint appears frivolous to anyone who looks at what was tested. Though the tests themselves were not released, newspaper reports cited examples of glaring errors on an elementary level. One-third of Massachusetts' potential teachers failed the reading and writing section of the test, basic skills that any of us would argue are essential for a teacher.

Further evidence for outrage appeared in *The New York Times* July 7. John Silber, the chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education, cited these spelling blunders: "belive," "serching," "messures," "deccress" (that's decrease) and he extracted this from a sample essay: "This method of observation should not be aloud under any cercumstances."

Silber, who helped design the test, called it easy enough for a "bright 10th grader" to pass. The exam questions were reviewed by teachers, scholars, and experts in the areas being tested, and they were validated for fairness by a panel of teachers, administrators, and college professors. In addition, according to Silber, the results in Massachusetts were not unlike those "in other states where comparable tests have been given."

Stronger teaching candidates must be recruited. Teachers' salaries can be made more competitive. But teaching conditions also need to be improved. That includes lowering class size, allocating adequate time for class preparation, and dealing with teacher concerns about student discipline. Most important, teachers should have a voice on issues related to curriculum and instruction.

Schools of education should also do their part to attract more promising candidates to the teaching profession. They might raise admission requirements, require a core of writing and reading-intensive liberal arts courses, and hold future teachers to rigorous academic standards, especially in their chosen majors.

Gov. Ridge appears to be addressing some of these issues. In his teacher preparation initiative, he calls for a higher grade point average for prospective teachers — 3.0 in the chosen discipline, up from the current 2.5. Would-be teachers would also have to fulfill the academic requirements of a major in their chosen subject. The state Department of Education is also reviewing raising passing scores on standardized tests for prospective teachers. *The Morning Call* reported Aug. 30 that these measures, for the most part, are gaining support.

The failure rate on the Massachusetts test should be a wake-up call for improving the caliber of future teachers in every state. Future teachers should be tested, and those tests should measure more than basic skills at a 10th grade level. Why should we allow our children to be taught and tested by those who can't pass the test themselves?

(Barbara Diamant, a member of the adjunct faculties, teaches English composition at Lehigh University and Northampton Community College.)



# Pa.'s reform movement could be prototype for the country

**F**orget the details. The education reform movement under way in Harrisburg is of truly historic proportions. Pennsylvania may even become the first state in the nation to finally, fully and firmly place the interests of kids first when it comes to reforming public schools. The signs are everywhere.

The Urban Education Commission appointed by the leadership of the House of Representatives says the "fundamental principle" in all reforms must be child-centered. "Everything should be rewarded or defined on the basis of what is good for children, rather than primarily good for adults."

Predictably, many adults who now run (is that spelled *ruin*?) the system are screaming bloody murder. In response, one commission member, state Rep. Tony Williams, says, "Dinosaurs die slowly. They'll rumble around and make large footprints, but they will die."

Williams' passion is driven by the simple fact that today's adult-centered system is quite simply killing the vast majority of the kids entrusted to it. As someone who could be defined, quite simplistically, as a liberal, he's madder than hell and won't take excuses any more.

Another commission member, Murray Dickman, shares Williams' passion even though he could, also simplistically, be defined as a true conservative. Dickman explains that the commission voted for multiple options like charters, vouchers, breaking Philadelphia's single system into 22 smaller systems and contracting with profit or non-profit firms to deliver a wide range of services because, "we need to prove the point that alternatives can save the children from today's currently failed system."

Just like the men who appointed it, Reps. John Perzel and Dwight Evans, the commission has shattered all stereotypes. With almost one voice, the blacks and whites, liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats on the commission agree with Evans' feeling that "everything must be on the table."

They want tough standards, expanded early-childhood programs and accountability systems with teeth affecting everyone in the system. Teachers, principals, parents and students must be convinced that school is serious and serious consequences will confront those who fail to live up to the system's standards.

And with respect to standards, Gov. Ridge indicated yesterday that he intends to establish and enforce tough new standards for all teachers as well as those who teach the teachers in Pennsylvania. Expect the dinosaurs who run the state's schools of higher education to rumble around in an effort to stamp out Ridge's initiative, but don't buy their self-centered bleating.

The adults who are running those schools of higher education are helping to ruin our public schools. The credentials game which they play clearly serves the interests of the adults in the system, but it sure doesn't help the kids.

Ridge's top-down initiative is a perfect complement to the commission's bottom-up approach to reform. This pincer move might finally convince the dinosaurs who defend the current system that "what is good for children rather than primarily good for adults" is not another empty slogan.

It's a declaration of war by the governor, the Legislature, blacks and whites, conservatives and liberals, Republicans and Democrats. And this



W. RUSSELL  
G. BYERS

Missing