

ANNUAL REPORT

**PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**BUREAU OF TEACHER
CERTIFICATION
AND
PREPARATION**

FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003

ANNUAL REPORT
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND PREPARATION
FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003

GENERAL

In accordance with the Chapter 49, State Board of Education regulations, the following annual report is submitted by the Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation for Fiscal Year 2002-2003 (FY02-03). The report is intended to provide Board members, the Department of Education and the public we serve with information pertaining to overall Bureau performance, certificates issued, testing results, programs evaluated, general trends and new initiatives.

BUREAU OVERVIEW

Basic Areas of Responsibilities:

1. Teacher Preparation
2. Teacher Certification
3. Public School Staffing
4. Individual Educator Compliance with Act 48 Requirements
5. Selected portions of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation

Teacher Preparation:

- Develop general standards, procedures and specific program guidelines for institutional preparation of professional educators.
- Review and approve new professional educator programs.
- Review, evaluate, and approve for continuation existing professional educator programs.
- Develop, coordinate and direct initial assessment programs for professional educator candidates.
- Develop, coordinate and direct assessment programs for all professional educators to meet Chapter 49 requirements and to determine continuing professional education areas requiring emphasis.
- Implement the concept Accelerated Certification of Teachers partnership with selected school districts and colleges and the Teacher Quality Enhancement grant for urban areas.

Teacher Certification:

- Develop policies, processes, procedures and materials for the certification of public school professional educators.
- Receive and evaluate applications for and issue professional educator certificates.
- Maintain records of Pennsylvania professional educators' certification.
- Develop policies and procedures for the application and issuance of Private Academic Teaching Certificates and for Certificates of Preliminary Education (Funeral Directors, foreign Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses).

Public School Staffing (Division of Teacher Education):

- Develop policies and guidelines for the professional staffing of public schools.
- Review and validate reported violations of staffing law, regulations and policies by local education agencies when cited by the Auditor General in a school audit.

Act 48 compliance (Division of Candidate Evaluation Services):

- Maintain individual professional educator continuing professional education records.
- Process applications and update records of those educators requesting voluntary inactive status.
- Notify the individual professional educator and (if employed) employing local education agency at 4-year mark of individual's status in meeting Act 48 requirements.
- Notify individual professional educator and (if employed) employing local education agency at 5-year mark that certificate of educator not meeting Act 48 requirements has been placed in inactive status.

Chapter 354 compliance (Division of Teacher Education):

- Implement curriculum and admission changes required by Chapter 354.
- Ensure all preparing institutions are aware of the Chapter 354 provisions and provide assistance them in their implementation.
- Conduct review of all certification programs and, during the initial round of reviews, focus attention on Chapter 354 compliance measures.
- Train team chiefs and members on proper procedures of a review under the Chapter 354 environment.

Organization:

Bureau Director's Office
Division of Candidate Evaluation Services
Division of Teacher Education
26 full-time professional and administrative staff

APPLICATION PROCESSING

Beginning in the fall of 2001, and continuing to date, there has been a dramatic improvement in processing efficiency of applications for certification due to the full implementation of the Teacher Certification System (TCS). This LAN system provides our evaluators instantaneous access to the status and details of any application or educator file, and the web-based portion provides educators in the field the opportunity to check their own records in an accurate, and secure, manner. The success of this system has led to other increased efficiencies as our professionals see other applications for technical innovation. Beginning in September 2002 electronic processing of 06 emergency (day to day substitutes) re-issuances was begun and this summer that process will be expanded so that all day-to-day substitutes may be “uploaded electronically”. During this year there were 10,493 paper applications for this type of certificate so the electronic process will significantly reduce the data entry workload in the Bureau and provide for a nearly instant response to the school districts. This task has been transferred to the school districts (in a truncated format) with the result that it saves the school districts approximately \$145,000 (we do not collect the fee) and will save thousands of work hours here, but even more dramatically, in the school districts as a roster is all that is required compared to the full application previously needed. Our approval rate for this type of emergency certification was above 99% so very little impact in the classroom is seen.

In a major improvement this spring a web-based overview of the Praxis tests needed for each certificate was made available to the teacher and to the evaluator—along with the identification of which tests remain to be taken and passed. While designed to assist the teacher, the larger impact has been to assist our certification evaluators as the computer program incorporates all the test changes over time, which is particularly difficult in evaluating an application where a teacher has taken tests over a period of years.

We are continuing to work on a process to allow Instructional I certificates to be electronically submitted, reviewed, and issued, although there are several hurdles remaining before that is ready to be field-tested. It is hoped that this procedure can be tested in several preparing institutions this fall and then fully implement the process in the spring of 2004. Reduced staffing, and an increased work load, have meant that during the busiest time of the year we have not been able to meet our goal of a two week turnaround on applications. At the time of this writing, during the peak of the summer rush, the turn around is an unacceptable seven weeks for out-of- state applicants. This year, for the first time, there was no period during the year where there was a significant drop in the numbers of applications/requests for certificates.

Because of the full implementation of the testing required by Chapter 49, and changes in certification procedures and test scores, the number of phone queries rose dramatically to more than 74,283 for the year with a 88.2 percent response rate. This response rate is below the Bureau’s goal of 92 percent. During June and July of this year we implemented a “triage” system using technical support personnel to take messages. This has increased the time the trained evaluators have to process the certification applications but does not provide the level of service that the Teacher Certification Division has aspired to, nor should it be accepted as an appropriate practice.

Because of the 17.6% increase in the number of applications processed, and several vacancies in evaluator positions, the processing backlog during many periods of the year was unacceptable. Again, triage was required and we processed the Level II applications as the penultimate priority and finally the out of state applications as last priority. From November through March the average time for issuance of a Level II certificate and an out of state applicant was 3.5 months.

CERTIFICATION ACTIONS

As shown below the number of instructional (Level I and Level II) certification actions increased 25 percent over the previous year for reasons not fully understood. The total number of teachers employed has remained reasonably constant so it is assumed that much of this year's increase reflects factors other than the demand for teachers. This trend is particularly visible over the last four years.

In its November 15, 2002 resolution the State Board of Education made provision for an "add-on" process to allow a certified teacher to add a second area of certification by demonstrating mastery of the content of that area. While not reflected in the numbers above, 448 teachers have added a second certificate through this process. Many of the new certificates are in some of the "hard to fill" areas such as Business/Computer/Information Technology-72, Chemistry-30, Family and Consumer Science-25, mathematics-13, Physics -10, and Spanish -17. While these numbers are still small, the process has been available on only two test dates and publicity has been word of mouth.

The testing of elementary teachers in grades 7 and 8 on middle level subjects necessary to bring them in line with the No Child Left Behind requirements will end on September 13. While the teachers are, not unexpectedly, not please with taking the test the fact that it is free has greatly eased the number of complaints received.

**Bureau of Teacher Certification
Pennsylvania 5-Year Review of Certificates Issued**

CERTIFICATION AREA	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	One Year	Five Year
INSTRUCTIONAL							
Agriculture	24	23	23	23	34	+47.8	+41.6
Art	389	341	364	309	440	+42.4	+13.1
Business Education	493	425	208	179	500	+179.3	+1.42
Communications	105	107	120	141	111	-21.2	+5.71
Cooperative Education	26	38	27	25	43	+72.0	+65.4
Early Childhood	1372	1167	1155	1259	1527	+21.2	+11.2
Elementary Education	7779	7080	7626	7339	9308	+26.8	+19.6
English	1099	929	1021	976	1213	+18.8	+10.3
Environmental Education	52	65	58	69	67	-2.8	+28.8
Foreign Languages	491	397	461	400	572	+24.0	+16.5
Health	14	19	14	17	15	-11.7	+7.1
Health & Physical Ed	614	502	579	568	754	+30.2	+22.8
Home Economics	80	77	67	77	84	+9.0	+5.0
Industrial Arts/Tech Ed	127	133	102	133	131	-1.5	+3.1
Library Science	176	139	167	131	228	+74.0	+29.5
Marketing/Distributive Ed	10	8	0	9	9	NA	-1.0
Mathematics	798	655	612	697	936	+34.3	+17.3
Music	478	428	451	434	534	+23.0	+11.7
Reading Specialist	608	531	517	562	824	+46.6	+35.5
Safety/Driver Ed	81	45	67	74	79	+6.7	+2.5
Biology	477	473	483	484	592	+22.3	+24.1
Chemistry	190	190	161	170	222	+30.5	+16.8
Earth & Space Science	135	118	127	94	142	+51.0	+5.2
General Science	438	421	412	364	457	+25.5	+4.3
Physics	139	119	121	100	144	+44.0	+3.6
Social Studies	1174	1058	1005	1065	1364	+28.1	+16.2
Hearing Impaired	78	47	53	48	57	+18.7	-26.9
Mental/Phys Handicapped	2183	2088	2142	2195	1995	-9.1	-8.6
Speech & Lang Impaired	287	230	247	251	358	+42.6	+24.7
Visually Impaired	31	34	44	30	40	+33.3	+29.0
TOTALS	19948	17887	18335	18223	22780		

CERTIFICATION AREA	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	One Year	Five Year
EDUCATION SPECIALISTS							
Dental Hygienist	6	1	4	0	1	NA	NA
Elementary School Counselor	431	315	351	269	371	+37.9	-1.39
Home & School Visitor	102	67	42	51	71	+39.2	-30.3
Instructional Technology	60	69	83	78	160	+105.1	+166.0
Nutrition Service	1	0	0	0	0	NA	NA
School Nurse	771	399	425	337	352	+4.4	-54.3
School Psychologist	230	204	235	168	251	+49.4	+9.13
Secondary School Counselor	583	485	468	423	572	+35.2	-1.88
Social Restoration	2	0	0	0	1	NA	NA
TOTALS	2186	1540	1608	1326	1779		

The chart above represents numbers of certification actions. The following shows the number of Instructional I certificates issued, in selected categories, which is the number of new teachers entering the system. The volatility in the selected areas is significant while the increases indicate that the decline may not be the result of the increase in cut scores in September 1999.

**FIVE-YEAR REVIEW
NUMBERS OF NEW TEACHERS IN SAMPLED PROGRAM AREAS
(INSTRUCTIONAL I, only)**

	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	1 YR Change	5 Yr. Change
Early Childhood	951	767	800	781	875	+12.0	-7.9 %
Spanish	171	120	158	158	198	+25.3	+15.8%
Physics	78	67	76	48	76	+58.3	-2.56 %
Chemistry	111	110	108	116	132	+13.8	+18.9%
Mathematics*	526	354	414	404	504	+24.7	-4.18%
Health & Physical Education*	390	288	367	361	416	+15.2	+6.66%
English*	778	643	735	717	751	+4.7	-3.47%
Elementary Education*	5,416	4,972	5,252	5,374	5,949	+10.7	+9.84%
Reading Specialist	216	174	230	257	323	+25.7	+49.5%
Biology*	306	317	352	370	364	-1.62	+18.9%

* Indicates areas where cutoff scores were raised 9/99

Elementary Education 164 to 168
 English 153 to 160
 Mathematics 127 to 136
 Biology 144 to 156
 Health & Physical Education 500 to 550

The 22% increase in the number of individuals certified during the year is welcome, as it halts a downward trend visible over the past five years. The decline from 1998/99 to 1999/00 was ubiquitous as all but Biology showed large declines. The large increases this year present a much more optimistic view, but are not easily explained.

Several possible causative factors are being examined:

1. This years graduates made their decision to enter the certification phase of their program in the spring or summer of 2000 and at that time economic factors may have been a motivator to seek a “safe” profession.
2. Chapter 354 went in to effect in September 2001 with the 2.6 GPA required. Part time students may have pushed for entry in September 2001 to avoid the 2.8 GPA which was to be required the following year.
3. In response to Title II, most of the preparing institutions require students to pass the Praxis I series of test before they enter the certification phase. This requirement,

coupled with reason four to follow, may mean that the classes were filled with better-qualified students.

4. Chapter 354 with its requirements to have 6 credits of college mathematics and 6 credits of English/English composition would also impact on the quality of a student admitted to a program.
5. When Chapter 354 was under discussion there was a point of view that by raising the standards we could raise the number of people entering the program.
6. Included in the numbers above is an unknown percent of the 219 teachers who added a second certificate by passing the content area test. Most of these 219 were, in fact, senior teachers with a Level II certificate so the impact is felt to be negligible.

While no definitive answer is expected, it seems to that Chapter 354 is having the desired impact and that students entering are better versed in mathematics, reading and writing as they must pass those entry tests: this same basic skill level is reflected in the final content areas tests as these fundamentals are threaded through all the Praxis II tests.

The decline in the number of Vocational Instructional I certificates continues and this year dropped from 86 to 77, a decrease of 10.4 percent. Remedial steps taken last year to assist the instructors in preparing for the Praxis test appear to have had the desired effect as the testing process is not the barrier it had been.

As shown in the summary chart below, many of the individuals had more than one certification action (for example, were dual certified) the total of 48,744 represents certification actions for 41,796 individual educators. The number of individuals certified during this reporting period is 19.6% more than the previous year.

**NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES ISSUED; NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING
LEVEL I and II**

PUBLIC SCHOOL	CERTIFICATION AREAS		INDIVIDUALS	
	2001-02	2002-03	2001-02	2002-03
INSTRUCTIONAL	18,993	24,264	15,468	19,622
INTERN	245	376	225	245
SUPERVISORY	258	151	250	150
ADMINISTRATIVE	1,321	1,047	1,152	994
EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST	1,346	1,803	1,262	1,691
VOCATIONAL	130	132	130	132
EMERGENCY	17,049	17,670	14,527	15,816
BACHELORS/MASTERS EQUIVALENCY	800	848	800	848
LETTER OF ELIGIBILITY	174	276	165	260
OTHER	1,119	3,167	973	2,914
TOTAL	41,435	49,734	34,952	42,672

The “other” - there were 710 certification actions for the state’s private academic schools an increase of 52 over the previous year.

The Bureau also certifies some non-teaching professions but the numbers, as shown below, are small and this is not a significant part of the workload.

Funeral Director	102
Nurse	103
Public Librarian	73

The total number of all certification actions is 42,950 and an increase of 1,515, or 3.6% over the 42,295 of previous year. This increase is less than last years 5.4% increase and reflects the balance between the increase in certificates issued and the decrease in emergency certificates needed.

CERTIFICATES ISSUED

The following tables contain a breakdown of public educator certificates issued by the Bureau during the 2002-2003 Fiscal Year. Figure 2 lists the Supervisory/Administrative by specialty; Figure 3, the Education Specialists by specialty; and Figure 4, the Instructional Certificates by specialty.

SUPERVISORY/ADMINISTRATIVE – CERTIFICATES ISSUED

CERTIFICATION AREA	INDIVIDUALS	
	2001-02	2002-03
Supervisory	248	149
Elementary Principal	675	497
Secondary Principal	634	534
Vocational Administrative Director	12	16
District Superintendent	140	228
Assistant Superintendent	32	42
IU Executive Director	2	4
Assistant IU Executive Director	0	2

EDUCATION SPECIALISTS—CERTIFICATES ISSUED

CERTIFICATION AREA	INDIVIDUALS	
	2001-02	2002-03
Dental Hygienist	0	1
Elementary School Counselor	269	371
Home & School Visitor	51	71
Instructional Technology	78	160
Nutrition Service	0	0
School Nurse	337	352
School Psychologist	168	250
Secondary School Counselor	423	571
Social Restoration	0	1

INSTRUCTIONAL CERTIFICATES (I AND II) ISSUED

CERTIFICATION AREA	INDIVIDUALS	
	2001-02	2002-03
Agriculture	23	34
Art	309	438
Business Education	179	203
Communications	141	111
Cooperative Education	25	43
Early Childhood	1,259	1,526
Elementary	7,339	9,303
English	976	1,212
Environmental Education	69	67
Foreign Languages	400	534
Health	17	15
Health & Physical Education	568	754
Home Economics	77	84
Industrial Arts/Tech Ed	133	131
Library Science	131	228
Mathematics	697	936

Music	434	534
Reading Specialist	562	824
Safety/Driver Education	74	79
Biology	484	590
Chemistry	170	222
Earth & Space Science	94	142
General Science	364	457
Physics	100	144
Social Studies	1,065	1,363
Hearing Impaired	48	57
Mentally/Physically Handicapped	2,195	1,994
Speech & Language Impaired	251	358
Visually Impaired	30	40

The following table gives the number of teachers recommended for certification by approved preparing institutions.

SOURCES OF TEACHERS RECOMMENDED FOR CERTIFICATION

In-State Teacher Preparation Institution			10,699
	State System	5,049	
	State Related	1,778	
	Private State-Aided	213	
	Private	3,999	
Out-of-State Teacher Preparation Institution			1,820
	TOTAL		12,519

The total number of teachers being certified to teach in Pennsylvania schools is up 18.8% from 9003. The number of teachers certified from state and state related systems is up (18.2% and 34.6%, respectively) and the state aided schools up 99%, on a small base. The number of people certified from out-of state schools is up 19.9% and may reflect the reduction in complexity in the certification process remedied by the State Board resolution of November 15, 2002.

THE TEACHER INTERN PROGRAM

The teacher intern program is designed to help those with a baccalaureate degree enter the teaching profession. These are individuals who have a degree in the area of certification sought but who have not had the benefit of graduating from one of the state's approved teacher preparation programs. The following table (Figure 6) lists the 371 Intern certificates issued during FY 02-03. Thirty-seven of the state's 93 preparing institutions are in support of this program.

CERTIFICATION AREA	NUMBER ISSUED	
	2001-02	2002-03
Art	0	0
Accounting	4	1
Data Processing	3	1
Marketing	5	0
Office Technologies	7	2
Elementary Education	54	80
Early Childhood	2	1
Communication	1	1
English	21	33
French	0	6
German	0	3
Japanese	0	0
Spanish	6	13
Health/Physical Education	0	0
Environmental Education	0	1
Home Economics	1	2
Library Media Specialist	0	1
Mathematics	6	27
Biology	19	15
Chemistry	7	3
Earth/Space Science	1	0
General Science	5	4
Physics	3	3
Social Studies	14	27
Mentally/Physically Handicapped	4	6
Vocational	78	141
TOTALS	241	371

The Alternative Certification Program allows an individual to substitute an advanced degree and/or 10 years of work experience for a traditional teacher preparation program. Because of the complexity of this program, only three individuals have been certified using these procedures.

EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION

A request for an emergency permit can only be made by a local education agency and then only after it has exhausted all reasonable avenues to hire a certified individual and has no fully qualified and properly certified applicant available. Emergency permits are issued for three basic reasons: 1) To fill a vacant position (educational obligation required); 2) To serve as a long-term substitute (educational obligation not required or educational obligation required for renewal); or 3) To serve as a day-to-day substitute.

The type 01 emergency is the best indicator of this most disruptive scenario and the state issued 4,990 of that type of certificate. Slightly more than half (52%) of that number was issued to

Philadelphia and statewide the total number of emergency certificates was 17,670, an increase of ONLY 3.6% over the previous year.

The large numbers of emergency certificates also represent a significant administrative burden for the school districts and for the Bureau. The great bulk of them arrive during the period mid July to mid August causing an extensive overload of the processing system at the same time it is pressing to process the large number of regular certifications needed for the beginning of the school year. Two years ago we started a pilot program where Philadelphia and the 29 IUs electronically submit their requests for emergency certification. The software screens the applicants for the key factors and electronically, near real time, approves the list. The exceptions are withheld and returned, by automatic email, with the reason for their rejection. This system has worked well and has now been made available to all districts for the 06 emergency permits which will reduce the number of hand processed applications by more than 10,000 and allow us to give quicker turnaround on all other certificates.

CERTIFICATION FILES

The Bureau maintains automated certification files on 670,572 individual professional educators. This represents an increase of 26,856 over the previous year as reflected in the BTCP database and the total number of certificates on file is now 1,129,212. Our oldest know certificate is dated July 21, 1899.

TESTING

The Pennsylvania Teacher Certification Testing Program is designed to assure that educators seeking an initial certificate to teach, or provide other educational services in Pennsylvania, meet certain minimum standards. There are several areas in which this testing is done. These include the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. For some candidates, general knowledge is also measured and knowledge of pedagogy is measured for those seeking instructional certificates. Finally, there is a detailed measurement of the content that the candidate will teach. The tests provide the Department with some confidence that the applicant has demonstrated basic skills, knowledge of pedagogy and knowledge of subject matter. The overall goal of the program is that all candidates will be tested in some fashion to allow them to demonstrate their capability before being certified.

There have been significant changes in the structure of tests required for certification. To comply with the provisions of Chapter 49.18, all Education Specialists are now required to take the Praxis Professional Standards Tests (PPSTs) and, when available, the appropriate content area test. Those already licensed by other state agencies, for example, registered nurses, no longer are required to take these tests.

In the chart that follows there are several areas of concern:

1. First time pass rates for chemistry are 54.7 % (up from 58.1% last year) and Pennsylvania’s median is well below the national median. This may be an indicator that our preparing institutions are presenting poorly structured programs or ones not fully consistent with the tests.

2. The mathematics pass rate is also low (56.7% but up from last year’s 52.5%) and the state median is again below the national median. As these programs are reviewed by the Bureau the rigor of these programs will be given increased attention. The Spanish pass rate is 44.4% and the state median far below the national. There are only speculative reasons for this anomaly.

3. With the low volume areas, for example Earth and Space Science where ten of fourteen passed, it is not possible to draw any meaningful conclusions.

TEST	NUMBER OF TESTS TAKEN	NATIONAL MEDIAN	STATE MEDIAN	CURRENT PASSING SCORE	PERCENT PASSING
Core Battery					
PLT: Grades 7-12	3972	175	171	167	61.93%
PLT: Grades K-6	6401	173	176	167	73.86%
Specialty Area Tests					
Agriculture (PA)	17	660	700	5115	94.12%
Art: Content Knowledge	355	173	176	161	67.04%
Biology: Content Knowledge	347	161	159	147	76.08%
Business Education	184	630	680	100	100.00%
Chemistry: Content Knowledge	190	164	157	154	54.74%
Communication (PA)	67	740	720	530	95.52%
Computerized PPST: Mathematics	5279	0	178	173	68.78%
Computerized PPST: Reading	4435	0	180	172	81.74%
Computerized PPST: Writing	4758	0	176	173	73.10%
Cooperative Education	39	840	810	770	71.79%
Early Childhood Education	820	660	650	530	95.12%
Earth Science: Content Knowledge	108	166	166	157	65.74%
Earth/Space Science	10	640	610	570	70.00%
Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students	24	171	178	164	91.67%
Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Know.	1690	0	175	136	99.29%
Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision	173	690	720	580	91.33%
Elementary Education: Content Knowledge	1404	0	162	142	85.61%
Elementary Education: Curric. Instruction & Assessment	7924	180	173	168	61.29%
English Language, Literature and Composition: Content Know.	745	178	174	160	80.54%
Environmental Education	64	700	720	100	100.00%
Family & Consumer Sciences	67	650	660	600	76.12%
Foreign Language Pedagogy	17	171	170	160	76.47%

French: Content Knowledge (contains listening section)	106	182	167	170	42.45%
General Science: Content Knowledge	218	150	164	146	83.03%
German: Content Knowledge (contains listening section)	34	188	165	165	47.06%
Health & Physical Education: Content Knowledge	362	157	166	146	93.65%
Health Education	12	700	740	650	91.67%
Library Media Specialist	129	720	690	620	90.70%
Marketing Education	2	720	690	550	100.00%
Mathematics: Content Knowledge (calculator required)	736	142	140	136	56.66%
Music: Content Knowledge (contains listening section)	358	164	165	158	71.79%
Physics: Content Knowledge	99	158	146	140	57.58%
PPST: Mathematics (calculators prohibited)	12,600	178	178	173	67.25%
PPST: Reading	11,156	179	179	172	78.92%
PPST: Writing	12,793	175	174	173	58.57%
Reading Specialist	552	620	610	570	69.02%
Safety/Driver Education	27	600	620	100	100.00%
School Guidance & Counseling (contains listening section)	336	660	670	100	100.00%
School Licensure Assessment	229	157	176	159	98.69%
School Psychologist	99	700	700	560	95.96%
Social Studies: Content Knowledge	1,202	168	160	157	57.57%
Spanish: Content Knowledge (contains listening section)	369	177	164	166	44.44%
Teaching Speech to Students with Language Impairment	173	710	690	100	100.00%
Teaching Students with Visual Impairments	20	750	730	620	85.00%
Technology Education	92	660	670	620	86.96%
Vocational General Knowledge	36	660	680	560	75.00%

The testing numbers above do not correspond with the numbers reported by the colleges/universities under Title II. For example: the Title II pass rate for Spanish is a respectable 74% with the University of Pittsburgh having a 100% pass rate. For mathematics the Title II pass rate is 88%: the University of Scranton has 100%. For chemistry the pass rate is 84% with the University of Pittsburgh again with a 100% pass rate. The numbers above include all test takers, many of whom take a given test on multiple occasions. The Title II numbers are distorted by the practice of some colleges/universities of defining a “program completer” as one that has passed all tests and will therefore count only the latest score—and have a 100% pass rate. USDOE is well aware of this issue—some states have 100% pass rates—but resolution is not expected in the near future.

Because of Pennsylvania's continuing difficulty with the Praxis language tests we have begun to examine other sources for this evaluation. In June of 2003 we selected 5 people, in several languages, who had failed a Praxis language test—three of them in Spanish and all were native speakers. At our request these candidates were evaluated using the ACTFL tests (also used by the US State Department) and achieved what is felt to be, by ACTFL and the other states that use it, an Advanced rating which is considered desirable for a secondary teacher. Additional research will be conducted along these lines but there is an assumption that there may be a more realistic test available to us.

LEVEL II ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Current requirements for what used to be referred to as the “permanent certificate” is that the candidate present evidence that he/she has completed 24 post-baccalaureate credits, has undergone an induction program, and has completed three years of satisfactory teaching. Since the Department has no control over any of these factors, there is no systematic way to compare candidates or to be certain that they have met a particular standard. This degree of uncertainty has provided the impetus to develop a Level II Assessment and this assessment was mandated by the State Board in paragraph 49.18 of Chapter 49. The new assessment system, developed over the past 15 months, was used on a trial basis for one year and is now mandatory for teachers whose initial certification was issued September 1, 2001 or later. An extensive outreach program has been done to explain the use of the form and it is expected there will be little difficulty: the form itself is applauded as “good” and the mechanics of its use are simple.

CERTIFICATION AUDIT FINDINGS

As part of post fiscal audits of local education agencies, the State Auditor General reviews educator files to ensure compliance with the School Code, State Board of Education regulations, and Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines. To assist in this effort, the Auditor General's Bureau of School Audits staff use the Bureau of Information Systems (BIS) Professional Personnel File and compare it with this Bureau's Teacher Certification File. This system provides the auditors with a preliminary indicator of possible certification staffing issues in preparation for school audits.

During the reporting period there were 60 audits forwarded from the AG's office and most of the findings involved lapsed certificates and lapsed emergency certificates with only about 5% of the citations involving an irregularity in a staffing assignment.

TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM REVIEW

During the past year, the Teacher Education Division completed the development of the “General Standards for Teacher Education Program Approval” contained in Chapter 354 and the “Specific Program Guidelines.” The Teacher Education staff reviewed the recommendations from all of the focus groups that had been convened to develop the Specific Program Guidelines and edited their recommendations into a standardized format and final draft. This draft was made available for comment by the teacher education community and other interested parties prior to submission for Departmental approval.

Fifteen Major Program Reviews were conducted during the reporting period. We have now trained a total of 38 team chairs and 620 team members in the new standards by the Preparation Division. A total of 15 colleges and universities underwent their five-year review, a detailed review of the curriculum and content of all their certification programs, during academic year 2002-2003.

The Teacher Education Division continues to collect data under the provisions of HEA Title II and the requirements of this report are extensive. Because this report is now several years old evidence of “adjustments” to the data based on the lack of a definition for “program completer” continue to mount. Colleges/Universities such as Dickinson, Gannon, Temple and Villanova are rated as “low performing” and are in the IV percentile. This is not consistent with the results of the reviews of the programs in these institutions nor with other indicators of those colleges.

COMMUNICATIONS

While the workload has increased dramatically, and we have not been able to meet our customer service goals, the situation would be much more serious were it not for our Teacher Certification System and the development and use of our web site.

The number of phone calls during the period was 74,263, an increase of 10,000 calls and responding to these calls in a rapid and accurate manner is the major reason for the positive relationship the Bureau has with the field. In the 2001-2002 year we were able to respond to only 85% of these calls; this year we had a slight improvement to 88% but still well below the goal of 92% which in previous years had been routine. We have used technical personnel (not evaluators) throughout the year in off-peak times and this has aided in our reply rate. Their ability to answer complex questions, however, is limited, and the Bureau finds itself in a challenging spiral; during the busy summer period the need for the evaluators to answer the phone is the greatest, but when they are on the phone they can not review and process the certification applications which then causes the number of phone calls to increase.

Technology has kept this from being a total collapse of service. During the six-month period January 2003 through June 2003 our Teaching in Pennsylvania link on the PDE web site had an average of 3.5 million “hits” per month which has enabled us to keep teachers much better informed of the ongoing changes in their profession.

REVISION OF THE CERTIFICATION AND STAFFING AND POLICY GUIDELINES

Over the years and during the course of any school year, our Bureau and the Teacher Education Division is asked to clarify the Department’s position and give advice on a variety of certification and staffing issues. To provide consistency in enforcing the laws and regulations pertaining to these matters, our Bureau has adopted a series of policies relative to certification of school personnel, the scope of the certificates relative to properly assigned duties, and guidance in staffing school programs. The first written policy and guideline statements known as Certification Operational Policies and Procedures were distributed to schools back in 1973. These were later revised and identified in 1975 as Professional Personnel Certification and

Staffing Policies and Guidelines, commonly referred to as CSPGs. Revisions took place again in 1987 with only minor changes since that time.

Certification Staffing Policies and Guidelines have been presented by the Department of Education as an up-to-date reference to provide guidance to school entities in complying with the laws and regulations governing certification and staffing practices. They represent official policy statements and help clarify to local boards of school directors, school administrators, and other affected personnel how schools are expected to utilize staff, and how they can comply with certification and staffing laws and regulations, court decisions, opinions of the Attorney General, administrative agency policy and administrative decisions of appeals taken from local educational agency hearings and other Department regulations which can affect staffing in their schools.

Each school is expected to use the publication as a resource guide in achieving educational excellence through proper certification and staffing practices. The Manual's Certification Staffing Policies and Guidelines are also used to by the Auditor General's School Audit Office to address Certification Audit Irregularities, which are then submitted to our Division for review. As such, compliance with these policies helps to avert many issues and problems that might stem from the audit review, field misunderstandings, or lack of information.

Such policies have evolved over the years. Policy statements are not 'finalized for eternity' but as new laws are enacted, regulations revised, and Department policies change, these CSPGs are reviewed periodically and revised for proper cause, broader understanding, and compliance. Keeping the materials up to date helps to alleviate any uncertainties about current department policies and guidelines as followed by the Bureau in advising schools of appropriate certification and staffing practices.

The 131 CSPGs have been updated/revised and it is planned that they will be available for public comment in October 2003.

FULBRIGHT TEACHER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The Bureau's Division of Teacher Education serves as an interview site for the potential candidates in the geographical area for the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program. Annually, the Bureau receives a list of candidates from the State Department. The Division of Teacher Education staff recruits a team of interviewers from educators who have previously participated in exchanges or who speak the language of the country the candidate is requesting. Upon completion of the personal interviews, the team's recommendations are forwarded to the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program for approval and selection.

CURRENT ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

Initiatives

The revision of Chapter 49 is in progress. This regulation is, in its current form, well written and fully implemented: changes being made are positive and the revised version should provide some

additional flexibility to the school districts as they come into compliance with the provision of the No Child Left Behind legislation that requires a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom.

An assessment for conversion to Level II has been developed and a year of “trial” implementation began in September 2002 with no significant issues noted.

Effective September 1, 2003 the requirement for teachers to take the Praxis PLT test is eliminated and the new assessment, based on PDE 430, to be used during student teaching will take its place.

Work has been completed on a program to develop a program to match the teacher certification database and the Professional Personnel system to permit the Bureau to assist local education agencies with staffing and validity issues. This allows the development of more meaningful data within the system and will be key for NCLB reporting.

The Bureau has posted an addition to our web site, which allows school districts seeking to fill positions, and teachers seeking positions, to contact each other.

The Bureau has received a “Teacher Enhancement Quality Grant” (\$665,000/year for five years) which would provide for an Accelerated Certification of Teachers program in selected urban school districts. A second grant (\$440,000/year for 5 years) was submitted over objections from legal and provides for the same “intern” arrangement in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg. The basic approach is to allow those with a non-teaching degree to complete a certification program in 12 to 16 months while they teach in the classroom under an Intern certificate. Both the school districts and the preparing institutions contacted are enthusiastic about the concept.

The Bureau has now implemented a Web-based project to help teacher certification candidates identify the appropriate Praxis tests required for us to issue a certificate to them. The test requirements have become increasingly complex and the Bureau responds to thousands of calls each year relating to the specific tests required for the issuance of a certificate. The Praxis test project was developed to match the specific subject area, the tests already taken and passed by a candidate and the test “rules” already incorporated in the Teacher Certification System.

In response to an OCR complaint a new program leading to a designation of Program Specialist-ESL was developed to ensure proper training for the ESL teachers of the Commonwealth. To date 50 programs have been approved: 24 in preparing institutions, 21 in intermediate units and 1 community college.

During the reporting period the on-line registration process for the reissuance of day-to-day substitute certificates was perfected and most of the larger IUs participated. The program has been modified for the summer of 2003 and we will process most (about 10,000) day-to-day substitute certificates on line. This will reduce our data input requirement by about 20% and should free up staff for other needed tasks.

During the reporting period 2003-2004 a program for the on-line registration of graduates from Pennsylvania preparing institutions will be developed and, if successful, will automate the issuance of about 10,000 additional applications.

In response to the decision to drop the Principles of Learning and Teaching Test, which did not accurately reflect Pennsylvania's requirements, the Division of Teacher Education contracted with ETS (Charlotte Danielson) and developed an assessment form, to be used during student teaching, as a replacement to the test. There has been almost universally a positive reception.

Within the same contract the Division developed an assessment to evaluate teachers as they become eligible for an Instructional II and additional, optional, versions for novice and senior teachers. Use of all three forms provides a school district with a best practice evaluation and a rating system aligned with the certification and Chapter 4 standards.

Issues

In July 2004 the Bureau will be required to notify all certified teachers informing them of their status under Act 48. Prior to July 2000 the Bureau did not routinely collect address and a goal for this year is to develop a system to continue systematically update the database. The specifics of this requirement are being examined as we have accurate addressees for only a small percentage of the more than 670,000 names in our database.