

OFFICE OF QUALITY PROFESSIONALS
Summary of State Board of Education Items
April 17-18, 2008

EDUCATOR LICENSURE

Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act Process: To Approve a Change to Licensure Guideline for the One-Year Interim Certificate as Recommended by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure Development

Specifications:

The Certification Commission is recommending a change to the current licensure guidelines for the One-Year Interim Certificate. This license is requested by the local school district on an emergency basis to fill a teaching position in which there is no certified candidate. The current one-year Interim Certificate policy allows that the license can be renewed for an additional year if the teacher documents progress toward full certification and completed an MDE online professional development course. The Office of Educator Licensure is requesting the change because districts are continuing to request multiple one-year licenses without seeking certified teachers and the online professional development requirements does not lead to licensure.

Background Information:

In August of 2005, the Certification Commission approved the attached policy regarding emergency certificates requested by the local school districts. MDE had made an attempt that year to discontinue the use of one-year emergency licenses to comply with No Child Left Behind guidance from the United States Department of Education in order to have all Mississippi teachers fully certified and highly qualified. However, with the teacher shortage that exists in our state, it has proven to be impossible to fully staff all teacher vacancies with fully licensed teachers. USDOE gave us permission to reinstate the use of the one-year emergency license as long as districts understood that these teachers must be reported as not highly qualified.

The existing One-year Interim Certificate was intended to allow districts to request the licenses to fill teacher vacancies. With these requests, the district and the candidate would submit a certification plan by which the teacher would agree to take the steps necessary to become certified within the school year of the one-year license. If the teacher did not meet licensure requirements during that year, the district could request another one-year Interim for that teacher if, during that school year, the teacher had:

- Made progress toward certification as indicated on the signed plan of certification
- Completed the MDE Online Professional Development Institute (OPDI)

Some of the problems that we have incurred regarding this license as it is currently being implemented are:

- Districts continuing to request one-year emergency licenses year after year without trying to find fully certified teachers to fill these positions. Many teachers have held one-year licenses for multiple years and have not yet become certified
- One-year Interim certificate holders not completing progress and OPDI during the life of the license and districts asking for extensions
- The expense to MDE of providing continual OPDI sessions to one-year license holders
- Students in Low performing school districts being taught by teachers that are not fully certified or highly qualified
- No minimum requirements for this license other than a bachelor's degree. No testing requirements for the first time request or proof of subject competency required.

In the Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, as Amended, Section 37-3-2, the part of the law that addresses teacher and administrator licensure, addresses Special Non-renewable licenses in (6)(d), stating:

The State Board of Education is authorized to establish rules and regulations to allow those educators not meeting requirements in subsection

(6)(a) – Approved Program,

(6)(b) – Non-traditional alternate route, or

(6)(c) – Expert Citizen

to be licensed for a period of not more than three (3) years, except by special approval of the State Board of Education.

The Office of Educator Licensure is requesting that this policy be amended to comply with state law in that no educator can be granted another Interim certificate after three years. We are also asking that the MDE Online Professional Development requirement be deleted from this policy in hopes that these candidates will concentrate their efforts on obtaining full certification rather than professional development, while excellent training, it does not lead to licensure.

Attachments:

1. Current licensure policy for the One-year Interim Certificate
2. Current instructions and application packet for the One-year Interim
3. Proposed new guideline for the Three-Year Interim Certificate

Current Licensure Guideline for One-Year Interim Certificate:

Interim One-Year Alternate Route Certification

This license issued at the request of a superintendent or district to an applicant who meets all licensure requirements listed below.

Evidence of progress in completing the requirements must be documented in order to renew this license for an additional year. Obtained by district request only.

License	Requirements	Validity	Renewable
Class A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requested by local district superintendent using "Local District Request Packet" 2. Completed application for Interim One-Year Alternate Route license 3. Plan of action from school district showing the steps by which the applicant will achieve standard certification 4. Transcripts verifying bachelor's degree or higher and/or other specified documents necessary 5. Documentation of utilization of MS Teacher Center's recruitment services <p>(See "Local District Request Packet" available at www.mde.k12.ms.us)</p>	1 year	Renewable for 1 year with documentation of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation in MDE Professional Development Institute 2. Teacher Mentoring and Induction program 3. Satisfactory progress toward full certification

Rationale: The Office of Quality Educators wants to ensure that all teaching positions in Mississippi are filled by professionals that hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Federal guidelines for No Child Left Behind states, "Teachers who are not yet fully certified may be considered to meet the certification requirements if they are:

- participating in an alternative route to certification
- receiving high-quality professional development
- participating in a program of intensive supervision or teacher mentoring program
- demonstrating satisfactory progress toward full certification

The district request only application packet is enclosed that is currently being used for the One-year Interim Certificate. The requirements are in the instructions.

Proposed Revised Policy for Three-Year Interim Certificate:

<p>Three-Year Interim Certificate Obtained by district request only.</p>			
<p><i>This license is issued at the request of a superintendent or district to a non-certified applicant if all requirements listed below are met. This will allow the district to employ a non-certified teacher while the teacher is completing licensure requirements for standard certification. <u>This license is non-renewable after three years and is not transferable to another school district.</u> Teachers employed on a Three-Year Interim Certificate are not highly qualified in core subject areas and must be reported by the school district as not highly qualified.</i></p>			
License	Requirements	Validity	Renewable
Class A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requested by local district superintendent using "Local District Request Packet" 2. Completed application for 3-yr Interim license 3. Plan of action from school district showing the steps by which the applicant will achieve standard certification 4. Transcripts verifying bachelor's degree or higher and/or other specified documents necessary 5. Documentation provided by the requesting school district of recruitment activities to fill the teaching position with a licensed teacher <p>(See "Local District Request Packet" available at http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/ed_licensure/licensure_application.htm)</p>	3 year	Non-Renewable

The Revised policy:

- allows no more than 3 years to achieve full certification
- eliminates the online professional development requirement
- one-year educators that hold the Interim Certificate during the 2007-2008 school year will only have two additional year to earn full certification
- eliminates the opportunity for school districts to continue to request 1-year emergency licenses for multiple years

If approved, this policy change will go into effect on July 1, 2008.