

Educator Quality Update

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

FALL 2008

**NEWS FOR
EDUCATOR
PREPARATION
PROGRAMS AND
ALTERNATE
ROUTES**

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Welcome Back to School!

As the leaves begin to change, we hope you'll take a few minutes to review this jam packed issue of the Educator Quality Update. We're including information on a number of fall events that might interest you as well as information to help you plan for your next full program approval visit. You might consider posting this newsletter for yourself or your colleagues. Please let us know if you have any topics or questions you'd like us to cover in future issues!

Reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

On August 14, 2008, the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, formerly referred to as the Higher Education Act, was signed into law. This reauthorization of the nation's higher education law addresses the price of college and includes provisions intended to improve the quality of K-12 teachers and raise accountability of higher education institutions. We would like to draw your attention to a few changes that may impact your work and/or reporting requirements.

As you know, a mandate in the original law required institutions to report the percentage of students who passed teacher licensing exams; this information is compiled into the state's Title II report for the Department of Education. Many institutions have since made passing the state required Praxis exams a graduation requirement which often results in a 100 percent pass rate. The reauthorization includes a provision that will require institutions to report average scale scores on exams in addition to pass rates (sec. 205 a 1).

Institutions will also now be required to report on the coursework requirements that special education teachers have in core academic areas and the training they receive in order to provide instruction in core academic areas (sec. 206 b 3); the training general education teachers receive to provide instruction to diverse populations, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students from low-income families (sec. 206 b 4); and the number of full-time equivalent faculty, adjunct faculty, and students in supervised clinical experiences (sec 205 b 1).

The full text of the HEOA can be found at: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-4137>. The accountability provisions for teacher preparation programs and states are in sections 205 to 208.

The law has been adopted, but the US DOE is only now in the process of developing regulations to implement the statute. Public hearings will be held throughout the country where interested parties can suggest issues related to the HEOA that should be considered for action by the negotiating committees. While it's not clear when the written comment period closes, the hearings extend through October 8.

The VT DOE will be submitting written comments in the next several weeks; please let Mary Beth McNulty know if you are interested in receiving a copy of these remarks. Information on the scheduled hearings and public comments can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html>.



Calendar of Events

September 19th, Friday 9:00 a.m. to noon at the DOE in Berlin.	Institutional Portfolio Writing Workshop
September 19th, Friday 1:00 - 3:30 p.m. at the DOE in Berlin.	VCTE Meeting
October 1st, Wednesday 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at the DOE in Berlin.	SPED Requirements Meeting
October 7th, Tuesday 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at the DOE in Berlin.	Transcript Review Training for Post-Baccalaureate or Masters Programs
October 24th, Friday 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Montpelier High School	Licensure Portfolio Conference, II

Institutional Portfolio Writing Workshop

As part of our ongoing efforts to support programs undergoing ROPA reviews, we would like to extend an invitation to you to participate in an institutional portfolio writing workshop.

Our first workshop is scheduled for Friday, September 19th, from 9 to noon. We'll meet at the DOE in Berlin (our new location!). While our focus will be on institutions scheduled for visits in 2009 and 2010, anyone who is interested in beginning the self-study process is welcome to attend. Middlebury will be attending to share their experiences with the self study.

If you haven't already, please let Rebecca Otis know if you can attend. Email her at Rebecca.Otis@state.vt.us or via phone at 828-2444. You are welcome to extend this invitation to anyone else who may be involved in preparing for the ROPA review and/or in writing the institutional portfolio.

We look forward to this opportunity to learn more about your programs!

VCTE Meeting

The next meeting of VCTE is September 19th at the new DOE Berlin Office from 1:00 - 3:30pm. The agenda is:

- 1:00 - 2:00 pm Meeting with Bill Romond, Deputy Commissioner. The purpose of this hour is to discuss the latest version of the Transformation of Education in VT and its implications for teacher education.
- 2:00 - 2:15 VCTE discussion.
- 2:15 - 3:00 Update from planning committee on the fall conference.
- 3:00 - 3:30 New business including agenda setting for VCTE.

Directions to the Department of Education, Berlin

1311 U.S. 302. To reach our new location - take exit 7 off Interstate 89. Continue straight through 3 traffic lights, at the third you will take the ramp toward US-302 W/ US-2/ Montpelier. At the bottom of the hill take a right onto the Barre Montpelier Road US-302.

The DOE is the large building located between Burger King and the Steak House. Please park at the front of the building and enter through the double glass doors with the Department of Education sign.

Changes in Special Education Requirements

We'll be meeting on October 1st from 1:00 to 3:00 in Berlin, to review changes being made to requirements for special educators. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, special educators who provide primary instruction in English language arts/reading, math, science, or social studies will have to meet content knowledge requirements appropriate for the grade levels of their students, not their students' performance levels. The content knowledge requirements must mirror those pertaining to classroom teachers of the same subjects and grade levels. (Only special educators who provide instruction exclusively to students who are assessed against alternative standards may continue to meet content knowledge requirements pertaining to the performance levels of their students.) Please attend this meeting to learn more about the implications of this change for special education teacher preparation programs.

Transcript Review Training for Post-Baccalaureate or Masters Programs

The Department of Education is offering interested institutions a transcript review training on Tuesday, October 7th, from 1:30 to 3:30. The training will be held in our new offices in Berlin at 1311 U.S. 302.

This is a great opportunity for licensing officers or admissions personnel to review the endorsement requirements and to discuss comprehensive transcript reviews that assess candidates' undergraduate majors for both breadth and mastery.

Anne Bordonaro and Mary Beth McNulty will work with institutions in assessing their review process for consistency with endorsement competencies. You are welcome to bring your questions, concerns, and any sample transcripts that you would like to discuss with the group. Please let Rebecca Otis know if you'll be able to attend at Rebecca.Otis@state.vt.us or 802-828-2444. The folks that attended last years training found it very helpful, and we encourage you to join us once again if you like!

Licensure Portfolio Conference, II

The Vermont Council for Teacher Educators (VCTE) and the Department of Education (DOE) will be hosting a follow-up portfolio conference on Friday, October 24th at Montpelier High School. This will be a day of working sessions on implementing and scoring the revised Level I Licensure Portfolio. Liberal arts and science faculty are also invited.

There is no cost to participants! Please pre-register by October 17, 2008, as space is limited to 75 registrants. For further information or to RSVP, please contact Rebecca Otis at Rebecca.Otis@state.vt.us or 802-828-2444.



Please Note the Montpelier Link Express bus route has several pick up and drop off locations in Burlington, Richmond, Waterbury and Montpelier. Cost for a one way ticket is \$4 per person. (www.cctaride.org)

Candidates Seeking a Second Endorsement

A number of institutions offer programs to candidates already initially licensed in Vermont. While these candidates may also add an endorsement through transcript review, there are clear benefits to completing an approved program. The purposeful sequence of experiences in an approved program may be more beneficial than candidates putting together a group of courses on their own.

The Licensing Office would like to clarify the following points for institutions who would like to recommend a candidate for a second endorsement:

- Educators who already have a license are not required to complete a second Level I Licensure Portfolio.
- Whatever your program requirements are, institutions are expected to document candidates' meeting of all endorsement competencies and additional requirements, if any. This is true for all candidates whether they are taking courses or documenting current or past learning through a portfolio process.
- **The transcript should document whenever program requirements have been waived, when substitutions have been made, or when credit for previous learning experiences has been rewarded.**

If you have questions about recommending a licensed educator for a second endorsement, please contact the Licensing Office at 802-828-2445!

Literacy Development and the Secondary and Middle Level English Endorsement

In reviewing transcripts for HQT, the following has come to our attention. Many programs provide all candidates with a strong *Reading in the Content Area* course or equivalent experience. While such courses or their equivalents are an excellent introduction to the processes and components of reading comprehension, **they often do not provide the depth English candidates need to meet the endorsement requirements.** Specifically, candidates may not acquire sufficient knowledge of the following:

- oral language acquisition and the relationship between oral language development and literacy development,
- assessment of literacy development and adaptation of instruction for individual students, and
- the process of writing development and components of effective written expression.

Candidates may also need additional study of the **critical analysis and interpretation of ideas and information in fiction and non-fiction literature.** A general methods course may also be insufficient toward addressing the above requirements unless great care is taken.

Regulation Checks and Full-Program Review Visits

ROPA standards and indicators encompass a number of Vermont regulations for governing the licensing of educators and the preparation of education professionals. ROPA Review Visits allow Review Teams the opportunity to not just evaluate institutions according to these standards but to also confirm that individual programs are in compliance with regulations. While ROPA Review Teams have always checked for regulation, it has come to our attention that we may not have been doing so as systematically as might be appropriate. Institutions, we understand, have sometimes felt “blindsided” when a Review Team determines that they are not meeting regulation.

In an effort to communicate more clearly with institutions regarding regulations, the Design Team is introducing a “regulation checklist.” Prior to a visit taking place, a member of the Licensing Office will request a meeting with the licensing officer of the institution in order to review the checklist together. This meeting is an opportunity for the licensing officer to walk the VT DOE Licensing Office staff member through the institution’s system for meeting regulations. Additionally, this regulation checklist will allow the Licensing Office to review regulations that are not explicitly addressed in the ROPA standards. The ROPA Review Team will then receive a copy of the checklist in order to discuss any questions regarding regulations.

Institutions should also be prepared for the VT DOE to conduct transcript reviews of candidates in the program areas seeking approval during this pre-visit conference or during the visit itself. This random sampling will allow the VT DOE to confirm that candidates are completing the program as described in the institution’s catalogue. Again, this allows for troubleshooting prior to a visit.

We hope that this process of reviewing regulations with institutions individually before full program reviews occur will “demystify” regulations and allow ROPA Review Teams to be more effective during visits. **The Licensing Office will forward licensing officers a copy of this checklist after its initial pilot this fall.** Thank you in advance for your patience and support of this process!

Program Assistance

Assistance is available to institutions and programs throughout the ROPA process. Marilyn Richardson serves as the Department’s liaison to higher education institutions and is available to meet with programs as they prepare for a visit. You may also contact Marilyn for assistance in writing the Design Document for new program visits, the Institutional Portfolio, or the Two-Year Report. Marilyn can be reached at lilliaplantings@hotmail.com or (802)425-2391.



Praxis I Alternatives

Praxis II Testing Centers & Test Dates

Alternatives to Praxis I: Qualifying SAT, GRE, or ACT scores can be accepted in lieu of Praxis I if licensure candidates meet the combined and minimum scores presented below. Based on correlational studies, these scores were found to be equivalent to Vermont's passing scores on the Praxis I Pre-Professional Skills Tests.

Qualifying SAT scores					
Taken Prior to April 1, 1995			Taken After April 1, 1995		
Combined	Verbal	Math	Combined	Verbal	Math
1000	420	470	1100	500	500

Candidates wishing to use SAT scores, will need to call The College Board at 866-756-7346 and request that their score report be sent to the Department using recipient code #4142.

Qualifying ACT scores	
English	Math
22	22

Candidates wishing to use ACT scores, will need to call ACT Records at 319-337-1313 and request that their score report be sent to the Department using recipient code #4331.

Qualifying GRE scores		
Combined	Verbal	Quantitative
1100*	500	500

*The GRE has three sections—verbal, quantitative, and analytical. The combined score is the total of only the verbal and quantitative test scores. For information on how to submit GRE test scores, please contact Linda Hendrickson (phone: 802-828-0449; e-mail: linda.hendrickson@state.vt.us).

Praxis II Testing Centers & Test Dates - The northwest testing location at Champlain College will no longer be available as of 9/13/2008. There is a new testing location at **Essex Junction Education Center**. For a complete list of test sites and tests offered see the ETS website: http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/lists/praxis_tc_domestic_VT.html.

Please Note - Not all Praxis II tests are offered on every test date. This is important when advising candidates whose licensure requirements dictate these tests be taken. See the table below for testing dates, locations, and the test offered on each date.

Vermont Test Centers and Test Dates			
Test Locations by Region	Test Dates	Registration Must be Received By	Late Registration Must be Received By (w/ \$45 late fee)
Southwest: Castleton State College North Central: Johnson State College Northeast: Lyndon State College Central: Norwich University (Praxis I only) Southeast: Woodstock Union High School	09/13/08 Note: All tests offered except Praxis I and Praxis II German, Latin, Physics-Essay, Chemistry-Essay	08/14/08	08/21/08
Same as above	11/15/08 Note: All tests offered except Praxis II French	10/16/08	10/23/08
Same as above	01/10/09 Note: All tests offered except Praxis II German, Latin, Physics-Essay, Chemistry-Essay	12/11/08	12/18/08
Same as above	03/14/09 Note: All tests offered except Praxis II French	02/12/09	02/19/09
Same as above	04/25/09 See 01/10/09 Note	03/26/09	04/02/09
Same as above	06/13/09 All tests offered except Praxis I and Praxis II French	05/14/09	05/21/09
Same as above	07/25/09 See 01/10/09 Note	06/25/09	07/02/09
*Primary Language Not English (PLNE) administration dates also <u>Only test scores received directly from ETS will be considered official.</u>			

Meet a VSBPE Member

The policies and regulations regarding teacher licensure and teacher preparation are made by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE). This 13-member, teacher majority, policy-making board appointed by the Governor oversees the training, licensing and professional standards of teachers and administrators. Its overarching goal is the promotion of educator quality. We thought you would be interested to meet a few of your Board members!

Vice Chair, Janet Steward has served on the Board since 2001. She is a 1st Grade Teacher at Morrystown Elementary School, and has been teaching for 26 years. Janet was the 2002 Vermont Teacher of the Year and a recipient of the 2004 U.S. Department of Education Star Teacher award. She is passionate about the teaching of reading and writing, and has led many trainings, workshops and professional development activities relating to these topics. Janet also enjoys spending time with her Scotch Highland Cattle, tending her 13 flower gardens, bird watching, and restoring old cars. Janet is the former Selectboard Chair for the Town of Plainfield, and currently participates in the Vermont Loon Recovery Project, finding and monitoring successful loon chick hatches on Vermont's lakes and ponds. She also sells her photography and Highland Beef at local Farmer's Markets throughout the year.

Russell Agne is a Professor of Education at The University of Vermont and is one of two higher education representatives on the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators. A former secondary school biology, physics and earth science teacher, he teaches pre-service K-6 science methods courses and graduate professional development courses. He also supervises practicum students in public school classrooms and advises Ed.D. students. The coordinator of UVM's M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction program, Russell maintains an active research program in topics involving preK-12 science curriculum implementation, standards and assessment, and educational policy. He collaborates with others to provide the appropriate use of technology/distance learning opportunities for educators throughout Vermont. He is on the Board of Directors of the Vermont Science Teachers Association (VSTA), a member of the South Burlington Natural Resources Committee, and a volunteer in numerous Vermont community organizations.

The Board meets once a month during the school year and all meetings are open to the public. For more information on meetings please check out: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_prostandards/vsbpe/vsbpe.html.

Licensing Officers: Why They Matter!

The VT DOE Licensing Office issues licenses to candidates who have the recommendation of an approved program on their transcript. It is the expectation of both the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) and the VT DOE that institutions only recommend qualified educators who have successfully completed an approved program in its entirety.

Every institution must identify a **licensing officer** whose central **responsibility is to confirm that each candidate has met all of the requirements for licensure prior to being issued a recommendation on a transcript**. Institutions should review their "check off procedures" periodically to confirm that the licensing officer can accurately verify that candidates have completed all requirements prior to recommending them for licensure. This is especially important if your institution has several delivery models (i.e., undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, graduate).

A number of institutions have several key "check-off" times which enable them to better advise candidates in completing licensure requirements. These often include: admission, just prior to student teaching, after student teaching and before graduation.

In the event that the Licensing Office has any questions or concerns regarding a transcript, the DOE will contact the licensing officer. We will also communicate important information regarding regulations and endorsements to the licensing officer.

Regulations Change Reminder

On April 1, 2008, three major types of revisions to the Educator Licensing Regulations took effect. These included: 1) technical corrections to the 2003 regulations, 2) revisions to the Career and Technical Education endorsements, and 3) changes necessitated by Act 214. The complete regulations can be found on our webpage at: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/regulations_endorsements.html.

Course Work and Grades

In recent months, the Licensing Office has identified a discrepancy in grade requirements for approved programs and for candidates who are seeking a license through transcript review, the process for candidates seeking an endorsement for which an approved Vermont educator preparation program does not exist, or did not exist within the last five (5) years.

Approved programs comply with regulation 5923.2 which requires that all candidates for student teaching exhibit academic competence "as attested by an overall B average, and a B average in field of major studies as defined by the institution, or written certification of intellectual competence by an academic dean."

Transcript Review requirements, however, are governed by regulation 5310 which states: "only coursework for which the applicant received a grade of "C" or better may be counted toward the requirements for initial licensure through transcript review."

We are recommending that programs not accept coursework from candidates that is below a C. We are making this recommendation in an effort to resolve this discrepancy and because the VSBPE may choose to alter the regulation for approved programs in the future. Additionally, it is important to note that course grades below a C cannot be counted towards meeting HQT requirements.

Contact Information

Vermont Department of Education homepage: www.education.vermont.gov

The licensing office accepts requests for information via e-mail to doe-licensinginfo@state.vt.us. E-mails must include a full name, complete mailing address, and telephone number with area code. The Licensing Office can also be reached at (802) 828-2445.

For information on Highly Qualified Teacher requirements please email doe-HQT@state.vt.us.

Please contact Mary Beth McNulty at MaryBeth.McNulty@state.vt.us or via phone at (802)828-5129 for information on the Results Oriented Program Approval (ROPA) process.

Important Web Links

ROPA Online! You may access the ROPA manual and Licensure Portfolio online at:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_prostandards/vsbpe/ropa_07.html

View the VSBPE Policy manual online at:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_prostandards/vsbpe/policy_manual_031208.pdf

Transcript Review Forms On-Line at:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/forms.html>

View the Approved Program Grid online at:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/approved_teacher_prep.html#approved

The complete Licensing Regulations can be found on our web page at:
http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/licensing/regulations_endorsements.html

Educator Licensing Main Page:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/maincert.html>

New!
For the latest news on Vermont's efforts to Transform schools, check out:
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/transformation.html#secondary>

What did you think?

This newsletter was put together by the Department of Education's Educator Quality Division. Please let us know what else we can do to make this an effective tool in communicating information regarding educator preparation programs. Please send feedback to MaryBeth.McNulty@state.vt.us. Thank you!



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