July 1, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO:       City and County Superintendents of Education
Deans of Education

FROM:    Thomas R. Bice, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

RE:       Teacher Education and Certification Changes

We evaluate rules on a consistent basis to determine whether best practices are being implemented and to assess ways to streamline procedures. Discussions over time among staff members and recent discussions among members of the Commission I appointed have led us to move forward now in implementing changes related to Teacher Education and Certification. The changes are effective July 1, 2014, unless otherwise noted below:

1. Current certificate continuation options will be retained and an additional option of 100 clock hours of allowable professional development from a prescribed listing of providers will be available for the renewal through continuation of Professional Educator and renewable Career and Technical Certificates.

2. For reinstatement of Professional Educator and Professional Leadership Certificates, current requirements indicate that if the certificate has lapsed for more than 6 months, applicants must successfully meet the current Praxis II test(s) requirement. The time period after which testing will be required is being extended from 6 months to 12 months.

3. Current certificate reinstatement options will be retained and additional options will be available:
   
a. For Professional Educator and renewable Career and Technical Certificates, 150 clock hours of allowable professional development from a prescribed listing of providers will reinstate a lapsed certificate.

   b. For Professional Educator and Professional Leadership Certificates, a passing score on the current Alabama-approved Praxis II test(s) for each area of certification for which reinstatement is sought will reinstate that area of certification. A passing score must have been attained on a test administration date after the expiration date of the certificate being reinstated.
i. This option is not available for individuals reinstating an area of certification for which there is no current Alabama-approved Praxis II test.

ii. For areas of certification for which there is an Alabama-approved Praxis II test, this will be the only option for reinstatement if the area of certification has lapsed for more than 12 months.

4. Certification applicants who are advised in writing by the Teacher Certification Section of the need to submit documentation will have 60 days from the date of the advisement to do so.

5. Certification applicants who are advised in writing by the Teacher Certification Section of the need to complete testing requirements will have 6 months from the date of the advisement to do so. Note that this change is not applicable to certificate reinstatement or alternative approaches to earning a professional certificate.

6. Applicants for Alabama certification through Certificate and Experience Reciprocity who hold a valid professional certificate from another state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. Territory, or the Department of Defense Education Activity in an area of educational administration will no longer be required to verify three years of administrative experience. Applicants will be required to verify a valid professional certificate endorsed in administration and three full years of full-time educational experience in a P-12 setting, which must include at least one full year of full-time P-12 classroom teaching experience.

7. Applicants for Alabama certification through Certificate and Experience Reciprocity who hold a valid professional certificate from another state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. Territory, or the Department of Defense Education Activity in supervision will no longer be required to verify three years of supervisory experience. Applicants will be required to verify a valid professional certificate endorsed in supervision and three full years of full-time educational experience in a P-12 setting, which must include at least one full year of full-time P-12 classroom teaching experience.

8. Language in the Teacher Education Chapter of the Alabama Administrative Code pertaining to the five-course limit for unconditional admission to all programs other than Instructional Leadership will no longer be enforced, but may be continued at the discretion of the Alabama IHE. IHEs may determine the number of courses candidates may complete prior to unconditional admission.

9. To be recommended for certification, individuals must meet approved program requirements. Institutions may use their discretion in approving course substitutions. However, Teacher Education staff members will be pleased to provide assistance if asked to do so.
10. Alabama IHEs that have Class A state-approved programs in Instructional Leadership will be able to recommend individuals for Class A certification in Instructional Leadership based on the completion of at least 18 semester hours of current program courses approved to meet State Board of Education standards. A Teacher Education staff member will contact each institution that prepares instructional leaders to discuss the courses used to meet Instructional Leadership standards. IHEs may not begin offering this option until approval has been received from the Alabama State Department of Education. Potential candidates must hold a valid Alabama Class A Professional Educator Certificate, meet requirements for admission to a Class A Instructional Leadership program, and meet requirements for certification.

I hope that you find the changes being made helpful as you prepare for the upcoming school year. For specific information related to the certification changes, please view the appropriate application forms at www.alsde.edu/CertificationForms. For questions regarding the Teacher Certification changes, you may contact Mrs. Sarah P. Justiss at sjustiss@alsde.edu. Please note that the Educational Testing Services (ETS) Web site will not reflect the aforementioned changes until August 2014. For questions regarding testing, you may contact Dr. Jendia Grissett at jgrissett@alsde.edu. For questions regarding the Teacher Education changes and general questions, you may contact Dr. Jayne A. Meyer at jmeyer@alsde.edu.

TRB/JAM

cc: Private School Administrators
    Teacher Certification Officers
    Mrs. Sherrill W. Parris
    Mr. Larry E. Craven
    Dr. Jayne A. Meyer
    Mrs. Sarah P. Justiss
    Dr. Jendia Grissett

FY14-2078