



**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

**FROM:** Johanna Duncan-Poitier  
*Johanna Duncan-Poitier*

**COMMITTEE:** Higher and Professional Education

**TITLE OF ITEM:** Discussion of Key Element of Regents Teaching Policy:  
Shortage of Teacher Educators in Certain Academic  
Disciplines

**DATE OF SUBMISSION:** January 27, 2003

**PROPOSED HANDLING:** Discussion

**RATIONALE FOR ITEM:** To seek Regents guidance on the waiver provision in Section  
52.21 of the Commissioner's Regulations relating to full-  
time/part-time teacher educators

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** Goals 2 and 3

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *[Signature]*

**SUMMARY:**

Over the past three years, the Commissioner and Department staff have had many conversations with stakeholders concerning the implementation of the Regents policy on teaching, *Teaching to Higher Standards: New York's Commitment*. These conversations have taken place in many forums including discussions with college presidents, meetings with deans of teacher education programs at colleges located in the metropolitan New York City area, conversations at the Call to Teaching Forums, meetings with the members of the Professional Standards and Practices Board, and advisory council meetings.

The Regents policy, as reflected in Commissioner's Regulations (§52.21(b)(2)(l)(h)), requires that the majority of credit bearing courses in teacher education programs be offered by full-time faculty. Due to shortages of teacher educators in certificate areas such as special education, bilingual education, math education and science education, many colleges have expressed concern about their ability to meet this requirement. When the Department registered over 3,000 new teacher education programs to comply with the Regents new teaching policy, there were a number of colleges that had not yet hired a sufficient number of full-time faculty. While the Department is working with these colleges to bring them into compliance, we recognize that there are serious shortages in certain teacher educator certificate areas that are impeding the ability of colleges to maintain or expand their programs.

This issue is not unique to New York State. Nationally, there is evidence of a growing shortage of teacher educators in certain disciplines. The March 2001 issue of the *Chronicle on Higher Education* reports on a study by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education regarding the shortage of teacher educators across the country. The article cited the following from the study:

- The greatest number of failed searches for faculty were in the areas of mathematics, reading, business, library media, early childhood elementary, vocational, and special education.
- The number of vacancies for teacher educators rose by 34 percent between 1997-98 and 1998-99 academic years alone, up from 1,268 available positions to 1,700.

The November 2002 issue of the *Chronicle on Higher Education* cites a 2001 study by Vanderbilt University concerning the shortage of special education faculty. The article cited the following from the study: "Some 30 percent of the special education faculty positions across the country were open and unfilled, and 20 percent more had been closed because they couldn't be filled. There was also 30 percent fewer doctorates awarded in special education than 20 years ago, and only about half those graduates chose to work at universities."

The 2002 report from the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education entitled, "A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families," found that "the current annual supply of special education doctorates cannot fill the annual faculty position vacancies, and every year approximately one-third of all position vacancies go unfilled. As more faculty approach retirement, there are fewer doctorate-level candidates to fill present and future openings. Providing quality faculty in our nation's colleges and universities is critical to ensuring educators receive the best preparation to enter classrooms ready to serve children with disabilities."

The supply of teachers in hard-to-staff certificate areas such as bilingual education, special education, etc. may be in jeopardy if teacher preparation programs are forced to downsize or close because of the lack of available full-time faculty. To support the maintenance and expansion of teacher education programs in hard-to-staff subject matter areas, the Department is recommending that, under specified circumstances, we provide a waiver to the requirement that the majority of credit-bearing education courses be taught by full-time faculty. The regulation allows the Commissioner to provide a waiver to this provision, "upon the showing of good cause satisfactory to the commissioner, including but not limited to a showing that the institution cannot meet the requirements because of the nature of the program, which otherwise meets the requirements of this part." We propose that a documented teacher educator shortage be considered "good cause satisfactory to the commissioner" as required in §52.21(b)(2)(i)(h), if the institution provides:

- Documented evidence that the institution has made significant efforts to recruit full-time faculty to fill positions in order to comply with the regulation.
- Documented evidence that there is a teacher educator shortage in the discipline in which the recruitment has failed, in the region in which the institution is located.

An institution able to provide the above data would be awarded a two-year waiver of the requirement that the "majority of credit bearing courses in the program are taught by full-time faculty".

The Department would report annually to the Regents on the number of institutions that have applied for and received a waiver and in which disciplines those waivers were granted. We would also periodically report to the Board of Regents on the status of the shortage of teacher educators in hard-to-staff subject matter areas.

As a part of the Department's overall assessment of the implementation of the Regents teaching policy, the effectiveness of the full-time faculty requirement will be reviewed. We believe, however, that given the current faculty shortages in hard-to-staff subject areas, it is essential that the Regents consider this issue now.

With the concurrence of the Board of Regents, the Department will notify institutions of the availability of the waiver in hard-to-staff subject areas for teacher educators.