



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 25, 1997

Dear Colleague:

The State Board of Education, with the support of the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, The Grable Family Foundation, and the Buhl Foundation is sponsoring research to assist the Board in determining policies and practices affecting the preparation, assessment and employment of newly-prepared teachers in the Commonwealth. The research is being conducted by the H. John Heinz School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie-Mellon University under our direction on behalf of the Board. Enclosed you will find a more complete description of the study.

Because of your interest in the Board's development of revisions to Chapter 49 (Certification of Professional Personnel), we are sending you this information. The research has begun and it is anticipated that it will be concluded during the fall of 1997. The findings of the research may shape the final version of Chapter 49 revisions and will likely initiate broad discussion on the preparation, assessment and employment of teachers and other educators. This public discussion may lead to further changes in policies and practices of the Board, the Department, teacher preparation programs or school districts designed to improve the quality of teachers and teaching.

We believe that this is an exciting project and we will keep you informed on its progress. Should you have any questions, please contact Peter Garland, the Board's Executive Director at (717) 787-3787.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Helen S. Caffrey in cursive.

Helen S. Caffrey
Vice Chairperson
Council of Higher Education

Handwritten signature of Karl R. Girton in cursive.

Karl R. Girton
Vice Chairperson
Council of Basic Education

Handwritten signature of Earl H. Horton in cursive.

Earl H. Horton
Chairperson
Council of Basic Education

STUDY OF TEACHER PREPARATION, ASSESSMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

This project is designed to assist the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, teacher-preparing institutions and boards of school directors in determining policies affecting the preparation, assessment and employment of newly-prepared teachers in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the research is to determine, based on careful research on assessment, preparation practices and employment practices, which policy options hold the greatest promise in improving the quality of teachers and teaching and ultimately the achievement of students. This research builds on a more limited scope monograph developed during the summer of 1996 by Dr. Robert Strauss of the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management. Funding for the study is provided by the Vira I. Heinz Endowment, The Grable Family Foundation, and the Buhl Foundation.

The Board believes that additional research will be helpful as important decisions about teachers and teaching are made by the Board. Leadership for the project will be provided by Board members Helen Caffrey, Karl Girton and Earl Horton. Key elements in the study will be the exploration of critical research questions and the exploration of options for change in policy and practice by a review panel convened to discuss the results of the research and to assist the Board in developing recommendations for action.

The critical research questions are:

Characteristics of Pennsylvania's Professional School Personnel in the Last 10 Years.

- ▶ By metropolitan labor market area (and the non-metro areas of the state), where do teachers and administrators get trained and where do they get hired? What are the trends in terms of age, experience, race, sex? For school districts, IUs, AVTSSs?
- ▶ Are there patterns of hiring in terms of area of teacher specialization and certificating institution? Are there patterns in terms of the NTE scores of hired teachers compared to those available?

What is Likely to Happen in the Next 10 Years Regarding Certification and Student Enrollments?

- ▶ By metropolitan labor market area, what are the likely administrative and teaching needs by area of certification? How do they compare to the numbers being trained in each metropolitan area?
- ▶ What are the demographic assumptions underlying the student enrollment projects which PDE makes available? How robust are they?

Information and Reporting

- ▶ What sort of reporting and information requirements would enable the market for public school teachers to operate more smoothly? What of these

requirements would enable the State Board and PDE to better perform their regulatory and oversight functions in conjunction with regulation?

- ▶ How is this accomplished in other, nearby states?

Comparative Aspects of Pennsylvania's Teacher Preparation and Selection Process .

- ▶ What are nearby states' current teacher preparation and selection standards?
- ▶ What are nearby states doing in terms of raising the standards for teacher preparation and selection?
- ▶ How do the statutory and regulatory bases for teacher preparation and selection in such states compare to those in Pennsylvania?
- ▶ Besides the NTE/Praxis, what other evaluation instruments are there? What other states use other evaluation instruments? What do the tests purport to measure?

Evidence on the Local, School District Employment Process

- ▶ For a representative sample (in terms of geography, enrollment size and wealth) of school districts, how do they hire teachers? Do they have and use written policies? Who is involved in the selection process?

Strategic Review Panel

The other important aspect of the study is the use of a review panel to discuss and deliberate findings emerging from research and the development and discussion of policy options for state, institutional and local action. A strategic review panel composed of representatives of the State Board of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Professional Standards and Practices Commission, teacher candidates, teachers and administrators, teacher preparation faculty and administrators, superintendents and school boards will be convened. We encourage the development of reaction panels on the local level to discuss implications for school action.

Timeframe

The major research questions will be explored through the summer and early fall of 1997 with the reaction panel convened for its initial meeting in late summer. The study and review panel discussions will be concluded by the end of 1997. It is intended that information made available in the exploration of research questions and reaction panels will be used by the Board in its refinement of Chapter 49, the Department in their responsibilities for program approval and design of teacher assessment system, teacher preparing institutions in their program design and delivery, and by local school boards in the refinement of hiring and evaluation policies and practices.

For More Information Contact: Peter H. Garland, Executive Director, State Board of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333. Phone: (717) 787-3787, Fax: (717) 787-7306