



800 Troy-Schenectady Road  
Latham, NY 12110



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February 16, 2012

Dear Faculty Members, Students, and Interested Community Members,

New York State United Teachers, in collaboration with United University Professions and the Professional Staff Congress, is calling on the NYS Board of Regents and NYS Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr. to respond to concerns regarding the new Certification Exams that will be required of those seeking an Initial Teaching Certificate.

**Background:** The New York State Education Department (SED) is developing new Certification Exams. Teacher candidates will be required to take and pass the following: a Performance Assessment/Portfolio--including videos from student teaching/clinical site, a Content Specialty Test, an Educating All Students Test and an Academic Literacy Skills Test. (Exams for School Building Leader are also being changed.)

The Board of Regents decided on February 14th to alter the original implementation date of May 2013. It has become more apparent with each passing month that teacher and school leader preparation programs have not had sufficient information to move forward with curriculum and assessment changes. It now appears, subject to USDOE approval, that the requirements will affect those applying for certification on or after **May 1, 2014**. Past practice with certification changes was to have the changes apply to new entrants to teacher preparation programs. The SED plan would have the new requirements apply to students who are currently sophomores in programs. Students should be able to know the requirements for a program before they begin.

#### Critical Concerns:

- Teacher preparation programs have not received adequate information in order to prepare students for the new exams (e.g., testing frameworks). Success with preparing students for the content will require changes in curriculum.
- Teacher preparation programs have not received sufficient information regarding the Performance Assessment/Portfolio in particular—which is designed to be developed during the preparation program (e.g., videotapes taken during student teaching/clinical experience[s]).
- Revising programs, securing recording equipment (for videotaping), and preparing faculty and staff require resources. To date, such support has not been provided.

#### Needed Actions:

1. In the past, when significant changes were made to Certification or Program requirements, such changes have typically applied to students entering programs. The implementation date for the new requirements must account for a transition period to modify curriculum and assessments.
2. The State Education Department must develop a mechanism to consult and communicate with faculty to ensure that required changes to enhance the preparation they offer to their students are completed well in advance of students entering programs.
3. Resources need to be provided to support faculty in revising curriculum (including clinical components) and redesigning programs. Resources also need to be provided for securing videotaping equipment.

Please mail your petitions by March 15th to: NYSUT/Research & Educational Services, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, New York, 12110.

In Solidarity,

Maria Neira  
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MN/LD/bjb/cwa1141/88182