The Office of Higher Education (OHE) newsletter describes the current and upcoming activities related to higher education, with a particular focus on the preparation of educators. This newsletter, past newsletters, and a subscription link are available online on the OHE website.

Education Law section 237 requires that the Board of Regents submit a plan for the development of higher education in the State, or a "Statewide Plan," to the Governor and legislature for Governor approval. The previous Statewide Plan spanned eight years from 2012-2020. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with the last year of the plan. Now that we are emerging from the pandemic, the Department <u>presented an overview</u> of the statewide planning process. The <u>presentation</u> to the Board of Regents about the 2023-2031 Statewide Plan for Higher Education summarizes the timeline and activities.

At its April 2020 meeting, the Board of Regents <u>initially adopted an emergency measure</u> to permit the six-clock-hour DASA training to be conducted entirely online, and no longer include at least three clock hours through face-to-face instruction, during the time period of the State of Emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to an Executive Order for the COVID-19 crisis. Since it was unclear at the time of the June 2021 Board of Regents meeting exactly how long the State of Emergency would remain in effect, the Board of Regents <u>adopted another emergency measure</u> that permits approved DASA training providers, including institutions of higher education, to provide DASA training entirely online through December 31, 2021 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This regulatory amendment ensures that DASA training can be completed entirely online until December 31, 2021, even though the State of Emergency has been lifted, and provides a set end date to help approved DASA training providers plan for this flexibility.

At its May 2017 meeting, the Board of Regents established new Initial and Professional School Counselor certificates

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The college recommendation for certification that educator preparation programs submit in the TEACH system is an attestation that the candidate completed all requirements in their registered program. The college recommendation is not an attestation that the candidate completed all certification requirements (e.g., passing certification exams, completing years of experience).

The program registration and completion requirements outlined in Part 52.21 of the Commissioner's regulations are separate from the certification requirements listed in Part 80. For example, according to the regulations, the only programs that require candidates to take and pass specified certification exams as a condition of the college recommendation for certification are School District Leader programs (leading to the Professional or Transitional D certificates) and School District Business Leader programs.

Therefore, educator preparation programs may not require candidates to complete certification requirements, in addition to program requirements, as a condition of the college recommendation for certification unless the certification requirements were included in the program requirements when the program was registered by the Department.

Candidates should be recommended for certification in TEACH immediately upon program completion. When candidates have completed a program that leads to Initial/Professional certification, the candidates must be recommended for both certificates. Not recommending candidates upon program completion can result in issues for the candidates, program, and Department.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) recently published the <u>Ed COVID-19 Handbook</u>, <u>Volume 3: Strategies</u> <u>for Safe Operation and Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education Students</u>, <u>Faculty</u>, <u>and Staff</u>, which is the third volume in a series to support the safe reopening and operation of K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. This volume focuses on higher education and includes topics such as safe practices for inperson learning; supporting higher education in navigating online learning in a pandemic; broadband and device access for higher education students, faculty, and staff; basic needs supports for students; student caregivers; mental health needs of students and staff; commitments to the community; and available federal funding and flexibilities.

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