

E-Certification, AC

Agency: 350 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Budget Period: 2009-11

Recommendation Summary Text (Short Description):

Superintendent Bergeson requests \$1,964,000 to develop and implement an online educator certification system by December 31, 2010. The online system will result in: 1) a reduction in the processing time for educator certificates; 2) an easier process for educators to submit documents required for a certificate and pay the application fee; 3) a reduction in the number of emergency, temporary permits currently issued because of the processing backlog; and 4) the availability of additional data elements for the teacher/student database in development. This request also includes funds to replace the current outmoded microfiche archival system with a document imaging system.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures		FY 2010	FY 2011	Total
General Fund – State	001-01	\$1,642,740	\$321,260	\$1,964,000
Total Cost		\$1,642,740	\$321,260	\$1,964,000

Staffing	FY 2010	FY 2011	Annual Avg.
Total FTEs Requested	2.25	2.25	2.25

Package Description

Background

This budget request will replace our current out-dated, inefficient system for processing educator certificates and related documents with a much more efficient, internet-based system. With the new system, we will be able to reduce the current application processing time of twelve weeks to two weeks or less, which will result in a major reduction in the frustration and problems experienced by educators, principals, and school district personnel officers in the hiring of new teachers and other educators.

Current situation

The current paper-based system for applying and processing teaching and other certificates (e.g., Administrator, Educational Staff Associates, Career and Technical Education) has not significantly changed since its inception. It involves manually keying in application information, physically moving applications from one desk to another, searching through multiple databases for applicant information (e.g., fingerprint record results), laboriously prepping, filming, microficheing the application and transcripts and stapling the microfiche to the applicant's file, and printing out the paper certificate and mailing the certificate to the applicant.

In addition, the number of educator certification actions has increased significantly, as well as the number of additional approvals they must obtain during the course of their career (e.g., documenting the requirement that teachers take 150 clock hour every five years). These changes in certification laws have resulted in a 25% increase in teaching

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certificates and related activities since 2004. This increase has been absorbed internally with no increase in staff, but has resulted in an increasingly large backlog and delay in processing time.

Year	Certificate Actions
2004	32,102
2005	37,307 Change to WAC 181-79A-145
2006	34,755
2007	39,018 Change to WAC 181-79A-145
2008	44,000 (Est.)

It is projected that the number of certificate actions will increase again in 2008.

In 2002, a consultant firm (NORED) analyzed the feasibility and benefits of a centralized staff credential system very similar to that which would be funded by this request. It found that:

“Whichever alternative is selected, the argument for change outweighs the case for the status quo, if for no other reason than the fact that technology is passing it by. There are, however, other arguments. The present system is not only cumbersome, costly, and of undeterminable reliability...”

This effort will build upon the progress that has been made with internal resources and budget efficiencies in moving the existing certification system to a web based tool available to all school districts through the existing EDS application. In addition, the shell of a certification website has been created offering downloadable forms and basic certification FAQ information.

Proposed Solution

1. E-Certification

With the advent of the internet and computer applications, this labor-intensive, inefficient system can be replaced by an online system that substantially reduces process time and the frustration currently experienced by prospective teachers, district administrators, district human resource personnel and educators. Oregon has successfully implemented an online certification system, and is now able to issue certificates within two weeks of receiving a completed application.

Funds requested in this package will build upon the progress that has been made with internal resources and budget efficiencies in moving the existing certification system to a web based tool available to all school districts through the existing EDS application. This package is the next step that will allow the input phases of the process (record development and transmittal via the internet) to connect to the data management, analyses and output phases of the process.

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With \$1051,000 of the funds requested, OSPI will create a web-based, centralized educator licensure/certification process and web site. The data system will document all state and federal legal requirements including requirement for NCLB, for licensing teachers, administrators and para-educators and include transcripts, fingerprint data, employment history, licenses and endorsements. In short, teachers/staff will each have an online account where they can view their credentials, submit certification applications, and keep up-to-date on requirements. They will also have electronic reminders of recertification dates.

Phase One of this project created a simple educator website with downloadable forms and basic FAQ certification information.

Phase Two rehosted the existing certification system from the VAX/Alpha to a modern platform and combined additional databases containing teacher credentials such as highly qualified teacher status and National Teacher certification. Phase 2 is scheduled to move to production by December 2008.

The purpose of this budget request, Phase Three, is to create a self-serve teacher portal for online view of an educator profile and submission of certification. This phase will include:

- Online Certification application status reporting
- Accept credit cards online for payment
- Email reminders of upcoming renewals
- Electronic transcript retrieval

Future plans, which include Phase Four, will:

- Link certification and teacher information to the state longitudinal student data system (CEDARS)
- Link to the state's higher education data system for centralized transcript information

2. Imaging of paper documents

The remaining \$912,000 of the funds requested is for the purchase of an imaging system for electronic filing and backup to replace the existing microfiche and paper filing processes. While the online certification will substantially reduce the number of paper documents in the long-term, OSPI will still have a need to store and retrieve paper documents since some applicants will continue to file their applications and related documents on paper. This will provide a fast online lookup system for researching requests. It also provides the inherent data recovery of an electronic system on a regular backup cycle.

Contact person

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Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

OSPI expects a decrease in total processing time from twelve weeks to an average of two weeks or less. In addition, staff will spend less time performing data entry and more time processing and researching applications for certificates.

Performance Measure Detail

OSPI expects a decrease in total processing time and number of emergency and temporary permits issued.

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

This package is directly focused on Goal 1: High Achievement for All Students. Districts need accessible, accurate and timely certification data to hire educators who are prepared to help all students achieve.

Reason for change:

This budget request will support the development of a system that better meets the needs of Washington employers (public school districts and approved private schools), educators, and policymakers by:

- Offering a self-service 24/7 online educator portal;
- Providing a one-stop data source of applicant information including test scores and previous and ongoing certification information;
- Implementing an automatic message generator for expiration notification and other pertinent applicant information and action items;
- Providing first year teacher data for compliance of NCLB reporting;
- Significantly reducing printing and mailing costs and related hardware; and
- Substantially reducing the total processing time from application to the issuance of a teaching certificate from twelve weeks to an average of two weeks or less. This reduction will result in:
 - Virtually eliminating the emergency and temporary permit process created when certification backlogs exist;
 - Providing timely information to applicants, certificate holders and employers regarding the status of employee and applicant certificates thus reducing an employer's hiring decision timeframe from job offer to placement; and
 - Expediting the receipt and processing of certification fees.

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

This decision package will strengthen government's ability to achieve results efficiently and effectively. The fast efficient lookup system will provide faster data retrieval and reporting of teacher data. In addition, this decision package will assist in improving student achievement in elementary, middle and high schools by providing accessible, accurate and timely certification data to hire educators who are prepared to help all

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students achieve. This package also leads to OSPI being able to implement Phase Four, an alignment of teacher and student data that will provide improved reporting correlating teaching and learning.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

This decision package improves the adequacy of tools to execute government functions.

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires that states report certification information to determine whether teachers are highly qualified. This decision package will assist in this reporting requirement.

The Professional Educators Standards Board have made this decision package a priority for the 2009 Legislative Session.

Policymakers are very interested in aligning teacher and student data. In 2007, legislators mandated districts report student and teacher data beginning in the 2008-09 school year. Funding this decision package will assist districts in this mandate and decrease the cost of implementation.

Finally, district knowledge of expirations of certificates and other important information relating to staff is a crucial risk management activity.

Impact on Clients and Services

There will be immediate and long lasting positive impact for teacher candidates using the system. Their applications will be processed efficiently and quickly without compromising the rigor of the review process. Educators will “take ownership” of their own records via user accounts. Updates and changes will be their responsibility and to their benefit.

School district employers will notice immediate efficiencies in processing time which will greatly enhance their ability to fill high demand positions and fill openings with their top candidates. This need will increase in the near term as math and science standards are increased resulting in the need for more teachers credentialed in these areas.

OSPI staff will be able to perform high level review and analysis work, rather than manual labor tasks related to filing, mailing and physically sorting documents. Sophisticated data requests and policy questions that are data driven will be able to be responded to in an efficient and effective manner.

Impact on Other State Programs

Support of teachers, administrators and other education professionals affects all state programs that focus on improving schools and reducing the achievement gap.

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What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

Current processing is paper intensive thus promoting a high risk of error. While certification requirements and policy nuances have been greatly expanded in 10 years, OSPI resources are static and a backlog is a serious concern. There is the expectation that paper based processes will all have to be internet-based in a very short time. There are no real alternatives to upgrading to an integrated data system.

In conjunction with PESB, the agency is considering the advantages and disadvantages of raising certification fees particularly as it related to a self-sustaining certification division; however, this project cannot wait for this analysis to be complete before starting.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

Most importantly, the twelve week delay in processing certificates will continue to worsen and backlogs will increase. This inefficient certification process will further frustrate teachers, principals, and other educators that must use the current system as well as certification staff at educational service districts and OSPI.

Potentially, Washington public schools might have educators teaching in classrooms without proper certification. An electronic certification system will allow OSPI and ESD certification offices to eliminate the issuing emergency and temporary permits and provide first year teacher data for compliance of NCLB reporting.

What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?

None.

What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?

Each phase would require review for potential change to Washington Administrative Code or Revised Code of Washington.

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Expenditure Calculations and Assumptions:

1. E-Certification

	Assumptions	FY 2010	FY 2011
<u>Hardware</u>			
SQL Server upgrade OS+Memory		\$500	\$0
Web Server (public) +OS +Virus		\$4,500	\$0
<u>Personnel</u>			
Contract Project Manager	.75 contract PM 15 months @ \$120/hour	\$187,500	\$32,000
Contract Business Analyst	.5 contract BA for 12 months @ \$100/hour	\$100,000	\$0
Contract Programmer	2 contract Developer 12 months @ \$110/hour	\$460,000	\$0
ITS 5 FTE programmer on going	FTE for Information Tech	\$126,000	\$121,000
Ecert Indirect based on other services (non FTE)		\$9,520	\$2,975
Merchant fees for online payments	Assumes 10% adoption first 3 years, 5% adoption ongoing @ \$2 per transaction	\$0	\$8,000
Subtotal Cost for eCert		\$888,020	\$163,975

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2. Imaging of paper documents

	Assumptions	FY 2010	FY 2011
<u>Hardware</u>			
Scanners	2 duplex scanners - 1 standalone PC networked	\$50,000	\$0
SAN storage	upgrade existing system 2.5 TB	\$20,000	\$0
Backup system	Offsite storage and recovery	\$20,000	\$0
<u>Software</u>			
Scanner Software (Ascent Capture)	Image capture, index, and adjustment assumes 5K per month workstation only license	\$30,000	\$16,000
Image retrieval and viewer	Search, retrieval, viewing, reprinting (either COTS, Agency repurpose, or developed by 4 mo contractor) Per Debbie Good Services	\$300,000	\$20,000
<u>Personnel</u>			
Contract Project Manager/ Business Analyst	.25 contract PM and BA 12 months @ \$120/hour (equivalent 1040 hours)	\$62,500	\$0
Helpdesk support (ITS 3)	.5 FTE in helpdesk	\$65,000	\$60,000
Imaging prep	Contract temp agency CSS2	\$100,000	\$0
Imaging prep & accting support	.75 FTE @ CSS level 3 ongoing	\$62,000	\$57,000
Imaging Indirect based on other services (non FTE)		\$45,220	\$4,284
Subtotal Cost for Imaging		\$754,720	\$157,284

Object Detail

		FY 2010	FY 2011	Total
A	Salary and Wages	\$144,000	\$144,000	\$288,000
B	Employee Benefits	\$46,300	\$46,300	\$92,600
C	Contracts	\$910,000	\$32,000	\$942,000
E	Goods/Services	\$432,440	\$93,960	\$526,400
G	Travel	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
J	Equipment	\$105,000	\$0	\$105,000
N	Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Interagency Reimbursement	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Objects		\$1,642,740	\$321,260	\$1,964,000

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Expenditures & FTEs by Program

Activity Inventory Item	Prog	Staffing			Operating Expenditures		
		FY 2010	FY 2011	Avg	FY 2010	FY 2011	Total
A006 Certification	010	2.25	2.25	2.25	\$1,642,740	\$321,260	\$1,964,000
Total Activities		2.25	2.25	2.25	\$1,642,740	\$321,260	\$1,964,000

Six-Year Expenditure Estimates

Fund	09-11 Total	11-13 Total	13-15 Total
General Fund – State	\$1,964,000	\$667,800	\$681,423
Expenditure Total	\$1,964,000	\$667,800	\$681,423
FTEs	2.25	2.25	2.25

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs:

1. E-Certification

	Assumptions	FY 2010	FY 2011	Ongoing Yearly
<i>Hardware</i>				
SQL Server upgrade OS+Memory		\$500	\$0	\$0
Web Server (public) +OS +Virus		\$4,500	\$0	\$1,000
<i>Personnel</i>				
Contract Project Manager	.75 contract PM 15 months @ \$120/hour	\$187,500	\$32,000	\$0
Contract Business Analyst	.5 contract BA for 12 months @ \$100/hour	\$100,000		
Contract Programmer	2 contract Developer 12 months @ \$110/hour	\$460,000	\$0	\$0
ITS 5 FTE programmer on going	FTE for Information Tech	\$126,000	\$121,000	\$121,000
Ecert Indirect based on other services (non FTE)		\$9,520	\$2,975	\$120
Merchant fees for online payments	Assumes 10% adoption first 3 years, 5% adoption ongoing @ \$2 per transaction	\$0	\$8,000	\$40,000
Subtotal Cost for eCert		\$888,020	\$163,975	\$162,120

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2. Imaging of paper documents

	Assumptions	FY 2010	FY 2011	Ongoing Yearly
<u>Hardware</u>				
Scanners	2 duplex scanners - 1 standalone PC networked	\$50,000	\$0	\$6,000
SAN storage	upgrade existing system 2.5 TB	\$20,000	\$0	\$2,000
Backup system	Offsite storage and recovery	\$20,000	\$0	\$2,000
<u>Software</u>				
Scanner Software (Ascent Capture)	Image capture, index, and adjustment assumes 5K per month workstation only license	\$30,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Image retrieval and viewer	Search, retrieval, viewing, reprinting (either COTS, Agency repurpose, or developed by 4 mo contractor) Per Debbie Good Services	\$300,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
<u>Personnel</u>				
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Helpdesk support (ITS 3)	.5 FTE in helpdesk	\$65,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Imaging prep	Contract temp agency CSS2	\$100,000	\$0	\$0
Imaging prep & accting support	.75 FTE @ CSS level 3 ongoing	\$62,000	\$57,000	\$57,000
Imaging Indirect based on other services (non FTE)		\$45,220	\$4,284	\$5,474
Subtotal Cost for Imaging		\$754,720	\$157,284	\$168,474

Budget impacts in future biennia:

Ongoing biennial costs include an assumption of 1.8% inflation. Merchant processing fees are expected to increase yearly with user adoption of the online application service. OSPI is planning on using existing state merchant processing through State Treasurer to take advantage of shared services and expected reduced costs. For the imaging of paper documents, OSPI expects to use an agency repurposed or off-the-shelf solution as an electronic file cabinet and workflow for archiving source documents - replacing microfiche. As the agency pilots imaging and workflow improvement, it is expected that the imaging system and business process workflow will expand to other areas of OSPI.