

E-Certification, RA

Agency: 350 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Budget Period: 2011-13

Recommendation Summary Text (Short Description):

Superintendent Dorn requests authority to collect an administration fee starting in FY 2012 that would fund moving the certification process into a paperless, more customer friendly and responsive system and pay for the current costs of processing certificates. This online certification application system will result in: 1) an easier process for educators to pay and submit documents required for a certificate; 2) a reduction in the processing time for educator certificates; 3) a reduction in the number of emergency, temporary permits currently issued because of the processing backlog; 4) Efficient collection of educator data including professional development credits that are not collected today; and 5) connection of existing and new teacher data with other databases to start analysis models of teacher effectiveness. In FY 2013, the fee would cover the \$1.6 million costs for the online certification application system and save the State General Fund \$855,437 in staffing costs related to processing of certificates.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
Educator Certification Processing Fund (new) XXX-6	\$0	\$2,455,437	\$2,455,437
General Fund State – 001-1		(\$855,437)	(\$855,437)
Total Cost	\$0	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000

Staffing	FY 2012	FY 2013	Annual Avg.
Total FTEs Requested	0	2.25	1.125

Operating Revenue	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
New (Certification Fee Revenue Code 0299)	\$1,278,849	\$1,278,849	\$2,557,698
Total Revenue	\$1,278,849	\$1,278,849	\$2,557,698

Package Description

Background

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 in the early 1900's. It involves manually keying in application information, physically moving applications from one desk to another, searching through multiple databases for applicant information

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(e.g., fingerprint record results), laboriously prepping, filming, microfiching 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. This increase has been absorbed internally with no increase in staff, but has resulted in an increasingly large backlog in which increases the processing time for a certificate. Significant delays in processing certificates can mean that a new teacher may not have their certificate by the start of the school year in September, or a current teacher may not be able to renew their contract in May.

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	38,000
2009	38,055

Because of the existing data entry backlog it is not feasible without the addition of staff to collect a complete set of educator professional development credits and clock hours.

Current situation

Currently the certification system relies heavily on an antiquated process. Paper applications are keyed into the central certification system by hand and documents sent in by teachers are stored on microfiche. As a result, the certification process and analyzing data on teachers is very labor intensive. This leaves little or no time for OSPI certification staff to provide much needed customer support to applicants. In addition, as policymakers are trying to make strategic investments in K-12, there is little easily accessible teacher data that can be used to link to student data.

Certification Fees

OSPI currently relies solely on funding through the State General Fund to support the teacher certification process. OSPI does not collect fees for the processing of teacher certifications. Teacher certification fees are currently governed by the Professional Educator Standards Board under RCW 28A.410.060. The fees can only be used for precertification professional preparation, program evaluation, professional in-service training programs, and provision of certification services by education service districts (ESDs). Certification fees as set by PESB range from \$1 for certification in Career and

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Technical Education to \$70 for a continuing teacher certificate. ESDs are also allowed to charge a standard \$20 fee for administrative costs.

Though all certificates must go through OSPI to be processed and stored, none of the fees collected go toward supporting the certification system. In addition, there are a large number of activities that have no fee attached to them. For example, teachers must submit clock hours every five years to maintain their license or inform OSPI of a change of address. This requires staff to manually check that all information has been correctly submitted and then key the new data into the system. The “no fee for services” make up approximately 46% of the certification activity that is processed at OSPI.

Certification System

The certification system was migrated from the VAX/Alpha mainframe as part of OSPI rehosting work. In the course of that work, OSPI also aggregated other educator databases to present to districts a better picture of educator credentials. The rehosted certification process still requires the staff keying of all certificate data by OSPI staff, but the database is on the modern SQL platform and easily available. This work allowed OSPI, PESB, and researchers to start analyzing the quality of the teaching workforce.

In a parallel effort, the CEDARS student data collection system was brought online in August 2009. This enhanced student collection expands on OSPI's previous student data collections to include student schedules, the educator teaching that course, and phases in standardized course coding for curriculum comparisons.

These two systems together allow OSPI, PESB, and researchers to start forming connections between the demographics of a student, the qualifications of the educator giving instruction to that student, and to teachers' certificates and endorsements.

The next step is the measurement of teacher effectiveness. This requires the collection of additional data through the certification system for all professional development credits and clock hours. There are 2 ways to accomplish this.

1. Expand the certification system to log the additional data fields and hire staff to key that data or
2. Expand the certification system and create a secure teacher certification website where teachers can login and apply for teaching certificates, check status, and self-report their professional development credits and clock hours and any additional data.

OSPI has compared the costs of option 1 vs. option 2 and the costs are essentially the same with option 2 offering many additional benefits.

Proposed Solution

1. E-Certification

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Using the new certification administration fee, 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 ESEA (formerly NCLB), for licensing teachers, administrators and para-educators and include transcripts, fingerprint data, employment history, licenses and endorsements. Additionally educators can self report all professional development credits and clock hours. In short, teachers/staff will each have an online account where they can view their credentials, submit certification applications, report ongoing education and keep up-to-date on requirements. They will also have electronic reminders of recertification dates.

The purpose of the fee is to create and maintain a self-serve teacher portal for online view of an educator profile and submission of certification. This includes:

- Online Certification applications submission
- Online Certification application status reporting
- Accept credit cards online for payment
- Email reminders of upcoming renewals
- Online data entry of professional development credits and clock hours
- Support data analysis activities by the PESB and OSPI on teacher preparation as it relates to student achievement.

Future plans, include:

- Link to the state's higher education data system for centralized transcript information
- Electronic transcript retrieval
- System data upload enhancements from outside entities (Higher Ed., Districts, ESD's)

2. Imaging of paper documents

The new fee will be used to purchase 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, like teachers coming in from out of state, 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

David Kinnunen, Associate Director, Professional Certification and Educator Data, 360-725-6406, david.kinnunen@k12.wa.us

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

OSPI expects a decrease in total processing time to an average of two weeks or less. Currently it takes five to twelve weeks to process and issue a certificate depending on

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the time of year. In addition, staff will spend less time performing data entry and more time processing and researching applications for certificates.

OSPI expects to speed communication to educators through a comprehensive list of educator email addresses (obtained through this new system).

OSPI and PESB expect to support research on teacher preparation as it relates to student achievements.

OSPI expects saving in staff time answering calls on certification processing status.

Performance Measure Detail

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

Districts need accessible, accurate and timely certification data to hire educators who are prepared to help all students achieve.

Reason for change:

This new certification fee will support the development of a system that better meets the needs of Washington educators, employers (public school districts and approved private schools), 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.
- Expanding the data collection of educator continuing education credits and clock hours
- Supporting data analysis and policy decisions of teacher preparations to student achievement

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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 students achieve. This package also leads to OSPI being able to align teacher and student data.

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. It also provides an option for funding better customer service for educators working on obtaining or renewing their certificates and saving money for the state.

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

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

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.

Supporting data analysis and policy decisions of teacher preparations to student achievement

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

Immediate Impacts

Teacher certification fees would increase by \$33.00. The range of total certification costs to an educator will range from a onetime fee of \$103 for continuing teacher certificate to \$33.00 to process clock hours to maintain that certification every five years. The table below shows how the new certification fees would compare with other licensed professions in Washington State:

	Profession	Licensing Fee	Renewal Fee	Renewal
1	Certified Counselor	\$110	\$90	Annual
2	Certified Adviser	\$80	\$85	Annual
3	Court Reporter	\$150	\$125	Annual

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4	Driver Training Instructor	\$150	\$100	Biennial
5	Registered Nurse	\$90.00	\$70.00	Annual
6	Social Worker	\$275.00	\$130.00	Annual

Impact after Launch of E-Certification

Starting in summer of 2013 teacher candidates will switch to using the new electronic certification 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 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.

This data when combined with CEDARS student data will allow for in-depth analysis of teacher preparation for the classes they teach. Further, it will connect teacher preparation with student achievement.

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.

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

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.

With regard to collecting additional data for educator continuing education, OSPI has considered two alternatives:

1. Expand the certification system to log the additional data fields and hire staff to key that data or
2. Expand the certification system and create a secure teacher certification website where teachers can login and apply for teaching certificates, check status, and

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self report their professional development credits and clock hours and any additional data

OSPI feels option 2 is the most comprehensive and solves both the OSPI backlog issue and the expanded Data Collection issue.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

Without the authority to collect fees or additional state funding, delays 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.

The measurement of teacher effectiveness is a federal priority as the next step in ESEA.

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?

A statute would need to be created that provides OSPI with the authority to collect fees. In addition a new account in law would need to be established to collect revenues from the fees. OSPI would also need to amend and create new rules under the procession of teacher certifications.

Expenditure and Revenue Calculations and Assumptions

Revenue Calculations and Assumptions:

This decision package assumes that a new certification administration fee will be charged for certification related services provided by OSPI. The fee is assumed to be \$33.00 and is applied to established certification fees under PESB and those activities that do not currently have a fee.

This decision package also assumes that about 30 percent of educators (teachers, administrators, paraeducators, etc.) each year will be served by the certification office each year. For the 2008-09 school year, the total number certificate related activities was 38,753. The total revenue generated would average about \$1,278,849 each fiscal year.

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The revenue from the new certification administration fee would fund the development and implementation of electronic certification the day to day functions of the certification office currently supported through the State General Fund (see table below).

	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
Expenditure			
Certification Office	\$855,437	\$855,437	\$1,710,874
E-Certification		\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
Total	\$855,437	\$2,451,000	\$3,302,000
Revenue			
State General Fund	\$855,437	\$0	\$855,437
New Certification Fee	\$1,278,849	\$1,278,849	\$2,557,698
Total	\$2,134,286	\$1,278,849	\$3,413,135
		Net Total	\$111,135

Expenditure Calculations and Assumptions:

New E-Cert System Costs

1. E-Certification

	Assumptions	FY 2012	FY 2013
<u>Hardware</u>			
SQL Server upgrade OS+Memory		\$0	\$500
Web Server (public) +OS +Virus		\$0	\$4,500
<u>Personnel</u>			
Contract Project Manager	.75 contract PM 15 months	\$0	\$191,000
Contract Business Analyst	.5 contract BA for 12 months	\$0	\$103,000
Contract Programmer	2 contract Developer 12 months	\$0	\$466,000
ITS 5 FTE programmer on going	FTE for Information Tech	\$0	\$123,000
-			
Merchant fees for online payments	Assumes 10% adoption first 3 years, 5% adoption ongoing @ \$2 per transaction	\$0	\$0
Subtotal Cost for eCert		\$0	\$888,000

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2. Imaging of paper documents

	Assumptions	FY 2012	FY 2013
<u>Hardware</u>			
Scanners	2 duplex scanners - 1 standalone PC networked	\$0	\$50,000
SAN storage	upgrade existing system 2.5 TB	\$0	\$20,000
Backup system	Offsite storage and recovery	\$0	\$20,000
<u>Software</u>			
Scanner Software (Ascent Capture)	Image capture, index, and adjustment assumes 5K per month workstation only license	\$0	\$30,000
Image retrieval and viewer	Search, retrieval, viewing, reprinting (either COTS, Agency repurpose, or developed by 4 mo contractor)	\$0	\$300,000
<u>Personnel</u>			
Contract Project Manager/ Business Analyst	.25 contract PM and BA 12 months	\$0	\$66,000
Helpdesk support (ITS 4)	.5 FTE in helpdesk	\$0	\$64,000
Imaging prep	Contract temp agency CSS2	\$0	\$103,000
Imaging prep & accting support	.75 FTE @ CSS level 3 ongoing	\$0	\$59,000
Subtotal Cost for Imaging		\$0	\$712,000

3. Current Certification Office Expenditures

The certification office is made-up of 12.5 FTEs and currently expends approximately \$855,000 including salaries, benefits, goods and services, travel, and equipment. As the new electronic certification system comes on line, the staff assigned to manually keying in data and scanning documents into microfiche will be shifted to providing more hands customer service support to educators as they move along the certification process.

Object Detail

		FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
A	Salary and Wages	\$0	\$137,618	\$137,618
B	Employee Benefits	\$0	\$68,956	\$68,956
C	Contracts	\$0	\$927,250	\$927,250
E	Goods/Services	\$0	\$13,088	\$13,088
G	Travel	\$0	\$13,088	\$13,088
J	Equipment	\$0	\$440,000	\$440,000

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N	Grants	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Interagency Reimbursement	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Objects		\$0	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000

Expenditures & FTEs by Program

Activity Inventory Item	Prog	Staffing			Operating Expenditures		
		FY 2012	FY 2013	Avg	FY 2012	FY 2013	Total
A006 Certification	010	0	2.25	1.125	\$0	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
Total Activities		0	2.25	1.125	\$0	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000

Six-Year Expenditure Estimates

Fund	11-13 Total	13-15 Total	15-17 Total
General Fund – State	(\$855,437)	(\$1,710,874)	(\$1,710,874)
Educator Certification Processing Fund (new) XXX-6	\$2,455,437	\$2,387,624	\$2,352,624
Expenditure Total	\$1,600,000	\$676,750	\$641,750
FTEs	1.125	2.25	2.25

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs:

1. E-Certification

	Assumptions	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY2014	Ongoing Yearly
<u>Hardware</u>					
	SQL Server upgrade OS+Memory	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$0
	Web Server (public) +OS +Virus	\$0	\$4,500	\$1,000	\$1,000
<u>Personnel</u>					
Contract Project Manager	.75 contract PM 15 months	\$0	\$191,000	\$35,000	\$0
Contract Business Analyst	.5 contract BA for 12 months	\$0	\$103,000		
Contract Programmer	2 contract Developer 12 months	\$0	\$466,000	\$0	\$0
ITS 5 FTE programmer on going	FTE for Information Tech	\$0	\$123,000	\$118,000	\$118,000

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Merchant fees for online payments	Assumes 80% adoption in first year @ \$2 per transaction	\$0	\$0	\$42,875	\$42,875
Subtotal Cost for eCert		\$0	\$888,000	\$196,875	\$161,875

2. Imaging of paper documents

	Assumptions	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	Ongoing Yearly
<u>Hardware</u>					
Scanners	2 duplex scanners - 1 standalone PC networked	\$0	\$50,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
SAN storage	upgrade existing system 2.5 TB	\$0	\$20,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Backup system	Offsite storage and recovery	\$0	\$20,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
<u>Software</u>					
Scanner Software (Ascent Capture)	Image capture, index, and adjustment assumes 5K per month workstation only license	\$0	\$30,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Image retrieval and viewer	Search, retrieval, viewing, reprinting (either COTS, Agency repurpose, or developed by 4 mo contractor)	\$0	\$300,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
<u>Personnel</u>					
Contract Project Manager/ Business Analyst	.25 contract PM and BA 12 months	\$0	\$66,000	\$0	\$0
Helpdesk support (ITS 4)	.5 FTE in helpdesk	\$0	\$64,000	\$59,000	\$59,000
Imaging prep	Contract temp agency CSS2	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0
Imaging prep & accting support	.75 FTE @ CSS level 3 ongoing	\$0	\$59,000	\$54,000	\$54,000
Subtotal Cost for Imaging		\$0	\$712,000	\$159,000	\$159,000

Distinction between one-time and ongoing costs:

There are one-time costs associated with the building of the E-certification system. Those costs consist mostly of service contracts.

There are on-going staffing, equipment replacement, and merchant fee for maintaining an online pay system. All these costs are associated with management or maintenance of the electronic certification system.

Budget impacts in future biennia:

Ongoing biennial costs include an assumption of 2.0% 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

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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.