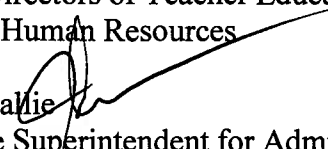




Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Maryland Approved Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Providers  
Deans and Directors of Teacher Education  
Directors of Human Resources

**FROM:** John E. Smeallie   
Deputy State Superintendent for Administration

**DATE:** April 17, 2009

**RE:** Update on Alternative Preparation/Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) Policy:  
Early Childhood and Elementary Education

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In May of 2007, I issued a document referred to as the *Academic Policy Memo*, the intent of which was to provide a guide for those partners engaged in Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) as they analyze transcripts of prospective program candidates. That memorandum provided clarification of related coursework that might be included at the discretion of the transcript analyst when an applicant did not present 30 or more hours of pure content in the area for which he or she hoped to acquire certification. While the suggestions have proven helpful when considering secondary candidates, inquiries and comments from our partners, and indeed, from candidates themselves, have prompted us to review in greater depth our treatment of potential Early Childhood and Elementary Education applicants, particularly when reviewing coursework that meets the six-hour requirement for social studies coursework and what courses might qualify a candidate.

In attempting to recognize the variety of content experiences presented by high-quality candidates while remaining mindful of the interests of the students they wish to serve, assuring coursework that relates to what children are learning in Maryland schools is a primary factor. The *Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum* identifies the following topics as headings for a curriculum that extends from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade and aligns with the Maryland State Assessments for grades in which testing is required: political science, people of the nation and world, geography, economics, history, and a continued emphasis on social studies skills and processes throughout the early years of school.

In keeping with that review, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) now advises that a candidate wishing to enter an alternative preparation program in Early Childhood or Elementary Education should present a transcript(s) that shows at least three hours of earned credit in history or geography, and that the additional three hours required may be met through coursework in political science, economics, people of the world and/or their relationships to one another, government, international relations/international studies, and sociology.

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We will continue to evaluate the outcomes of this policy decision as revealed through the annual data collection process, as well as the upcoming State Program Approval process that will be piloted beginning later this year. It is possible that additional changes could be made in MSDE's ongoing efforts to ensure programs of integrity in our MAAPPs while maintaining flexibility in their implementation.

As always, I appreciate the many contributions that you are making to the educational success of our schools and students across Maryland. Please contact me should you have any questions or comments regarding the information that is being shared here.

JES:MD:mlk

c: Norma Allen  
Michelle Dunkle  
Dr. Joann Ericson