

October 29, 2009

## **REPA Myths and ISTA Clarifications**

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) issued an e-statement to educators to dispel what it termed as "myths" being voiced concerning the proposed revisions to Indiana's teacher preparation and licensure rules (also known as REPA-Revisions for Educator Preparation and Accountability).

ISTA offers the following information to clarify these issues and continues to advocate for solutions to the establishment for fair teacher preparation and licensing rules-ensuring that Indiana's public schools continue to be staffed with highly qualified, dedicated professionals.

### **IDOE MYTH 1:**

REPA will NOT require current teachers to take instructional or content-area exams to continue teaching or to renew their licenses. Only first-time teacher applicants would be required to prove content knowledge through content-area exams.

#### **ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

REPA would allow the advisory board to require that certain teachers in elementary school settings who seek relicensure (not just initial teachers) first demonstrate proficiency in reading comprehension through the successful completion of a written examination approved by the board. The advisory board could implement this without any further hearings or public comment.

### **IDOE MYTH 2:**

REPA will NOT cause any teacher to lose his/her license or job. All currently licensed educators will be licensed to teach the same grade levels and content areas under the REPA. All license endorsements for current teachers will transfer to their new licenses.

#### **ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

REPA particularly puts in jeopardy the teaching positions of middle school teachers who hold a general elementary license (grades 1-6, 7/8 non-departmentalized) issued under Rules 46-47. How? Under the REPA guidelines, these teachers would be restricted to teaching K-5 absent going back to school for content-area emphasis and/or passing a content-area test.

These teachers should be permitted to retain grade-level and subject-matter licenses (including minors and endorsements) that have been granted according to prior rules without the imposition of additional college courses or testing mandates as they have been deemed to be highly qualified under federal standards and have been evaluated as successful teachers by their principals.

**IDOE MYTH 3:**

REPA will NOT eliminate IDOE licensing for psychologists, counselors, social workers and speech-language-hearing clinicians.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

The IDOE will continue to issue licenses for school psychologists, counselors, social workers and speech-language-hearing clinicians. The main changes in REPA concerning these disciplines are that:  
(1) an individual with a master's degree in a related field may also qualify for one of these licenses; and  
(2) there are no other standards-based pre-requisites required to be recognized.

**IDOE MYTH 4:**

Current teachers will have greater flexibility under REPA. REPA will allow teachers to add endorsements to their licenses by proving proficiency by passing the PRAXIS II exam in each endorsement area.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

The IDOE statements are accurate.

**IDOE MYTH 5:**

REPA will save teachers thousands of dollars in license renewal. REPA will allow teachers to use professional development and in-service credits to renew their licenses, saving teachers thousands of dollars in tuition costs. Teachers would still have the option to renew their licenses every five years by obtaining six credit hours from colleges or universities.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

Under the existing relicensure rules, teachers have had the option of using professional development and in-service activities towards relicensure. However, participation in in-service workshops has been limited to 50 percent of the license renewal requirements (45 hours) with participation in professional conferences or workshops also limited to 50 percent of the license renewal requirements (45 hours).

REPA would allow a teacher to participate in in-service and professional workshops for 100 percent (90 hours) of the license

renewal professional development requirements. Teachers would only have to pay for graduate courses if they chose to.

**IDOE MYTH 6:**

REPA will renew Accomplished Practitioner licenses for 10 years instead of five years, as the current licensing system mandates.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

Accomplished practitioner licenses would be valid for 10 years as stipulated, however, the renewal requirements must be completed in the last five years of the 10-year license term period in order to qualify.

**IDOE MYTH 7:**

REPA will NOT eliminate pedagogy or student teaching requirements for future teachers. REPA aims to capture the most essential pedagogical concepts and strike a more even balance between content knowledge and pedagogy-particularly for middle and secondary educators. Under REPA, all new teachers will be required to complete nine weeks of student teaching before receiving licensure.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

REPA caps the number of professional education and pedagogy semester credit hours (30 semester hours for education majors and 18 semester hours for education minors) and specifically adds online programs as approved programs.

**IDOE MYTH 8:**

REPA will NOT require every teacher to obtain a bachelor's degree in a subject area. Current teachers will not be affected at all by a degree requirement. Future elementary teachers may still receive a traditional elementary education major. Only future secondary teachers would be required to receive degrees with content-area majors with minors in education. Moreover, by requiring secondary teachers (6-12) to receive content-area majors in the subjects they teach, Indiana's teachers will meet the mandated requirements of the Highly Qualified Teacher provision within the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

Indiana's teachers already have been deemed to be highly qualified under federal guidelines. Indiana's current licensure system includes many paths to a teacher license-from the traditional route, through transition to teaching, through emergency licensure.

**IDOE MYTH 9:**

REPA will NOT allow a new teacher to obtain a license by completing an online

program, such as the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE). REPA does not approve any new alternative programs, including ABCTE, at this time. It does, however, allow for review of such programs at a later date to determine whether they are suitable for use in Indiana.

**ISTA CLARIFICATION:**

Under certain circumstances REPA does appear to include online programs as approved programs as approved by the board without further public hearings.

