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Eliminating Barriers for Interstate Teachers by Jordan Cash

Of the many benefits that come from a teaching career, one of the most cited and misunderstood is mobility. The common thought is that teachers are always needed somewhere, and it is easy for teachers to move from one state to another with few problems. Unfortunately, this assumption does not consider the complexity of licensure recertification.

Teacher certification is different in every state, as each state has certain specifications and requirements to ensure they have the best educators possible. Such regulations are reasonable and necessary. Problems arise, however, when teachers move from one state to another and must become recertified in that state. In fact, one study showed that in 2006, over 30,000 educators left the profession because they "changed residence."[\[1\]](#)

Nebraska's recertification process for incoming teachers is more rigorous than in other states, and only provides temporary and provisional licenses based on their Nebraska employment statuses and whether they have completed a set of specific competency tests and training courses.[\[2\]](#) Other states are not so strict, as some grant full reciprocity and comparable certification or have only a few basic competency tests which may be waived if the applicant has the necessary experience.[\[3\]](#) There is, of course, nothing wrong with competency tests to ensure Nebraska has quality teachers, but the specific training and tests can act as a deterrent and barrier to teachers moving into the state and continuing to teach. Such barriers may even be contributing to Nebraska's teacher shortage, as the Nebraska Department of Education has reported a lack of teachers in math, science, special education, language arts, Spanish, agriculture, and speech pathology for the 2011-2012 school year.[\[4\]](#)

One way Nebraska could begin to eliminate barriers to out-of-state teachers would be to join the interstate agreement constructed by National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). The NASDTEC interstate agreement creates a process for states to work together creating a simplified path for certified teachers to gain recertification in member states. This is done through an informational warehouse system where states communicate on what their different standards are and what teachers are licensed in the state. Teachers moving to different states can use the warehouse for detailed information on how to be recertified in another state and states can use it to check on if an applicant's out-of-state teaching license remains in good standing or has any problems with their professional record. This process saves moving

teacher's time and effort in understanding other states regulations and saves the time and resources of states who would otherwise have to do extensive background research on out-of-state applicants.[5]

The NASDTEC agreement would not overshadow Nebraska's certification process. The agreement is clear that states control their own certification programs, and may add their own standards for recertification.[6] NASDTEC would simply make it easier for applicants to understand and conform to Nebraska's recertification laws and aid the state in ensuring out-of-state applicants are of a high quality.

Joining the agreement would help applicants enter Nebraska's educational system, and aid Nebraska teachers moving out of state to continue their career. Forty states, one territory, the District of Columbia, and even the Canadian province of British Columbia have all signed the agreement, and several of these states even give applicants from member states full, or at least provisional, reciprocity as long as they pass necessary competency tests.[7]

There is no question that Nebraska deserves to have the highest quality teachers available; however, the requirements currently in place make it harder for excellent teachers to come to Nebraska. By joining the NASDTEC, Nebraska may begin to ease the way for great teachers to come to the state without sacrificing our own high standards.

[1] Jane G. Coggs and Susan K. Sexton, "Teachers on the Move: A Look at Teacher Interstate Mobility Policy and Practice," May 2008, Learning Point Associates. Available at http://www.nasdtc.org/docs/Final_Report.pdf, accessed July 9, 2012.

[2] Swarthmore College, "State-by-State Chart for Policies on Reciprocity and Out-of-State Teacher Certification." Available at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/State%20Certification%20Reciprocity.pdf>, accessed July 9, 2012.

[3] Swarthmore College, "State-by-State Chart for Policies on Reciprocity and Out-of-State Teacher Certification." Available at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/State%20Certification%20Reciprocity.pdf>, accessed July 9, 2012.

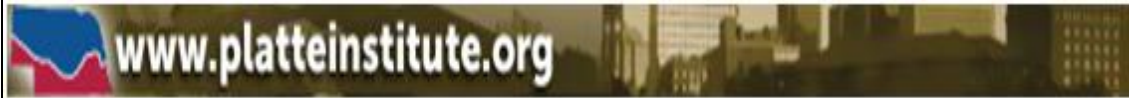
[4] Nebraska Department of Education, "Nebraska Teacher Shortage: 2011-2012 School Year." Available at <http://www.education.ne.gov/EducatorPrep/SecondPages/TeShortage.html>, accessed July 9, 2012.

[5] National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, "NASDTEC Interstate Agreement for Educator Licensure 2010-2015." Available at <http://www.nasdtc.org/agreement/NASDTEC%20Agreement%202010-2015.pdf>,

accessed July 9, 2012.

[6] National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, "NASDTEC Interstate Agreement for Educator Licensure 2010-2015." Available at <http://www.nasdtec.org/agreement/NASDTEC%20Agreement%202010-2015.pdf>, accessed July 9, 2012.

[7] National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, "The NASDTEC Interstate Agreement Facilitating Mobility of Educational Personnel." Available at <http://www.nasdtec.org/agreement.php>, accessed July 9, 2012; Swarthmore College, "State-by-State Chart for Policies on Reciprocity and Out-of-State Teacher Certification." Available at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/State%20Certification%20Reciprocity.pdf>, accessed July 9, 2012.



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