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### **State Board of Education Amends Regulations to Increase Teacher Supply**

The State Board of Education today gave its final approval to amended regulations that add flexibility to the current eligibility requirements for teacher candidates. The change adopted today would allow teacher candidates who graduate from college prior to September 1, 2004 to apply for teaching certificates if their grade point average (GPA) is at least 2.50.

"As a result of these amended regulations, school districts will be able to draw upon a broader pool of talented teacher candidates to fill vacancies or expand their staffs to accommodate rising enrollments," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "The amendments also provide additional time for future teachers in teacher training programs or candidates who plan to enter teaching through the alternate route to certification who graduate after September 1, 2004, to prepare for a 2.75 GPA requirement.

"We want to assure that all students have opportunities to learn from excellent teachers," said Maud Dahme, president of the State Board of Education. "By setting a GPA requirement of 2.50, we believe that we will strike a successful balance between maintaining the quality of our teaching force while maintaining an adequate supply of teachers."

The 2.75 GPA was established in September, 2000 in response to an education initiative of former Governor Whitman. Although the purpose of the new regulation was to enhance teacher quality, the 2.75 GPA has resulted in some less favorable consequences. Since September 2000, 1,057 candidates, or 5 percent of a total of 20,257 applicants, were denied certification because they did not meet the 2.75 GPA requirement. Of that number, approximately 50 percent presented GPAs between 2.50 and 2.75. These numbers do not include potential candidates who did not apply for certification because they knew they would not meet the requirement.

Of particular concern was the 31 percent rejection rate of candidates for preschool through grade three certification since September 2000. Commissioner Librera has said that the reduction of the teacher pool in this critical area has compromised the state's ability to comply with the Supreme Court's mandate for preschool education.

Out-of-state candidates who are experienced teachers but who lack the required GPA would be allowed to submit their out-of-state teaching certificates and documentation of three years successful teaching under their certificates.