NJDOE News

Educators to Participate in Videoconference
Explaining New Automated Teacher Certification System

More than 250 school superintendents, principals and other educators are expectedto participate tomorrow (November 21) in an interactive videoconference designed to introduce them to a new automated teacher certification system that is being developed to speed the certification process. The videoconference, which will be hosted at eight different sites, is scheduled to begin at 3:30 p.m.

Reporters who would like to attend the videoconference may do so in the first floor conference room of the Department of Education 100 River View Plaza, Trenton (off Route 29 South).

Deputy Commissioner of Education Dwight R. Pfennig will lead a presentation on how the new process will operate. Participants will include county superintendents, school district superintendents, central office personnel and principals as part of New Jersey ELITE (Exemplary Leadership Institutes for Technology in Education), an initiative sponsored by the Department of Education with the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, through private and corporate funding.

The Department of Education has released a request for proposal (RFP) to develop the software for the new automated teacher certification system and is expected to select a vendor in December. The system, which will be operated by the Department of Education, will be implemented in two phases.

Phase I will include automating the processes for certification, the approval of college programs, intake/scanning processes, and intake of test scores. Phase I should be fully implemented by the end of March 2003. However, there should be visible signs of improvement in the system as early as the end of January 2003.

Phase II, which will include a comprehensive on-line tracking system for provisional applications and on-line access for certification candidates and prospective employers to track progress of an application, should be technically implemented by the end of next summer, and full implementation should be in place by June 2004.

The Department of Education is currently averaging a three- to four-month backlog on processing standard certifications, a two-month backlog on alternate route certification, and a four- to six-month backlog for specialized student services.

The department has used in-house "swat teams" of personnel to keep the backlog at a lower level. In addition, the department has established a courier service to deliver new certification applications from the 21 county offices of education to the department in Trenton to help expedite the process. The courier service will be maintained until the new automated system is fully implemented.

A list of the host sites for tomorrow's videoconference is attached.