

DATE: August 16, 2024

RE: **Executive Summary** of Proposed Revisions of Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24 (Rule 24) *Regulations for Certificate Endorsements*

The Nebraska Department of Education has drafted a public input copy of Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 24, *Regulations for Certificate Endorsements* (Rule 24). The State Board of Education, Rules and Regulations Committee, has had ongoing conversations regarding policy issues and solutions since September of 2023. Nebraska Department of Education staff has received input from certification applicants, educator preparation program professionals, teachers, administrators, and other interested parties to aid in the identification of policy issues and explore solutions since July of 2023. The Department has utilized the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education (NCTE) as an advisory group to aid in the identification of policy issues, propose solutions, and provide feedback to potential revisions. NCTE is an advisory group that includes equal representation of (1) teachers, (2) educator preparation programs, and (3) governance groups for a total of 48 members (16 members per group). NCTE has met three times since October of 2023 and has provided substantial feedback to the revision process, including focusing on revisions to the special education related endorsements. Additionally, Department staff engaged the MOEC Human Resources-Task Force in 2024 to help identify policy issues, discuss potential solutions, and provide feedback regarding potential revisions.

1. **A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE MAJOR AND SUBSTANTIVE PROVISIONS OF THE RULE.**

Rule 24 contains regulations for obtaining endorsements, indicating grade levels, and areas of specialization on Nebraska teaching administrative, and special services certificates and permits.

2. **A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED CHAPTER OR AMENDMENT, AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE EFFECTS IT WILL HAVE IF PROMULGATED.**

Chapter 24 is adopted pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §79-808. The proposed revisions to this rule incorporate changes enacted by the Nebraska Legislature in 2024, addresses one identified policy issue, and includes general maintenance (revisions to endorsements, adding a computer science endorsement, reducing redundancy, and minor edits). Through engagement with stakeholders one policy issue was identified:

- (1) Endorsement programs are too expensive and time consuming. The public input draft of Rule 24 addresses this issue in three ways:
 - a. Elimination of content tests for anyone qualifying for an endorsement who has completed a program through a standard institution of higher education. Educator preparation program students demonstrate their endorsement area knowledge through meeting course requirements. Requiring educators to complete a singular high stakes test is not best practice, duplicative of in-course evaluations, and costly.
 - b. Eliminates naming of a singular testing company to allow the Board to look at alternative evaluation options, specifically in operationalizing Neb. Rev. Stat §79-810(3)(a). This would provide the State Board of Education appropriate flexibility

- to identify appropriate tests and consider other factors such as cost.
- c. Providing educator preparation programs the ability to reduce the total required credit hours for any teaching endorsement by fifty (50) percent if the educator preparation program determines the applicant demonstrated competency in the endorsement area. This revision will allow educator preparation programs to evaluate an applicant's content competencies which will potentially result in shorter endorsement programs and savings for the applicant, while allowing institutions to meet or exceed Nebraska's expected standards for quality educators.

3. **A DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSES OF PERSONS WHO MAY BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED CHAPTER, AND HOW THEY MAY BE AFFECTED.**

The Rule revisions would affect current educators, future educators, and students. Educators or future educators completing endorsement programs offered by educator preparation programs would not be required to take content examinations which would result in cost savings. Providing for the Board the ability to set a content test, not restrictive to a singular company, provides a potential for cost savings and an increase in the quality of assessments identified. Additionally, endorsement programs may be reduced by fifty percent if the applicant demonstrated competency in an endorsement area, which would save time and be a cost savings to the applicant. These changes will result in an increase in the number of endorsements issued to applicants, thus more properly endorsed teachers instructing Nebraska students.