



Associate Commissioner  
Office of Higher Education  
Room 977, Education Building Annex  
Albany, New York 12234

Tel: (518) 486-3633  
Fax: (518) 486-2254  
E-mail: [jfrey@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:jfrey@mail.nysed.gov)

April 15, 2008

To: District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Deans and Chairs of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

From: Joseph P. Frey 

Subject: School Leadership Update

I am writing to update you on the certification examination requirement for school leaders as well as plans to provide flexibility in the employment and certification of school leaders.

#### Examination Schedule

The first four administrations of the examinations for candidates for certification in the school leadership titles: School Building Leader (SBL), School District Leader (SDL), and School District Business Leader (SDBL) will be scheduled during the following months:

<b>October 2008</b>	<b>First administration</b>
<b>February 2009</b>	<b>Second administration</b>
<b>April 2009</b>	<b>Third administration</b>
<b>July 2009</b>	<b>Fourth administration</b>

The specific administration dates will be provided in a future memorandum and on the National Evaluation Systems Web site at [www.nystce.nesinc.com](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com).

#### Examination Requirement for Certification

All candidates graduating from preparation programs in educational leadership after February 1, 2009 will be required to achieve satisfactory scores on the appropriate Educational Leadership Assessment to qualify for a certificate. (Candidates who graduate from registered programs before February 2, 2009 may continue to qualify for a certificate without passing the examination.)

<b>February 1, 2009</b>	<b>Date after which graduates of SBL, SDL, and SDBL programs will be required to meet the exam requirement</b>
-------------------------	--

## Description of Examinations

Each of the school leadership examinations will consist of two four-hour tests and will be administered at least four times annually. Candidates for the SDL and the SDBL, who will be required to achieve a passing exam score to satisfy both program graduation and certification requirements, will have three opportunities prior to May 2009, and a fourth prior to September 2009, to pass the required exam. The examination schedule, frameworks, and preparation guides are available on the National Evaluation Systems Web site at [www.nystce.nesinc.com](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com).

## Registration of “Companion” Programs

Because satisfactory performance on the examination for School District Leader and School District Business Leader will become a program completion requirement after February 1, 2009 for ALL registered preparation programs leading to certification in these titles, there is the possibility that an individual, who completes all academic program requirements, but who does not pass the exam, would not be able to graduate from the program. Therefore, we suggest that colleges and universities consider registering “companion” programs to their certification programs prior to September 1, 2009. A companion program is the same as the program leading to certification, except that it does not include passage of the exam as a program requirement and does not lead to a recommendation for SDL or SDBL certification.

Such companion programs allow an institution to transfer a candidate enrolled in a program registered as leading to the SDL or SDBL certificate, who has been unable to satisfy the examination requirement, into the companion (non-certificate) program, thus allowing the candidate to be conferred a degree. It must be clearly understood that completion of a companion program will not allow the institution to recommend an individual for SDL or SDBL certification, and the individual will not be eligible for certification. However, should someone who completed the companion program subsequently pass the appropriate exam, they could be recommended for certification.

## Flexibility in Employment of School Leaders

An amendment to Commissioner’s Regulations is being developed to provide flexibility to those school districts whose board authorizes only one school leadership position in the district. The new provision would enable a school district leader who holds the SDL certificate to also concurrently carry out the duties of a school building leader or school district business leader.

## New Supplementary Certificate

A second amendment to Commissioner’s Regulations is being developed to establish a Supplementary certificate to enhance the ability of an individual who either holds or is eligible for a school leadership certificate in one title (SDL, SBL, or SDBL) to complete the educational requirements for a certificate in another leadership title, while being employed in the new (supplementary) area. The requirements for the Supplementary certificate would include passing the examination in the new area, having an offer of employment in that area, and satisfying any

other certification requirements (for example, three years of teaching experience for the SBL). This certificate would be comparable to the Supplementary certificate now available for classroom teachers.

### New Transitional “D” Certificate

A third amendment to Commissioner’s Regulations is being developed to establish a Transitional “D” certificate leading to certification as a School District Business Leader (SDBL). Experienced applicants holding MBA, MPA, and CPA credentials, as well as those deemed qualified by virtue of other credentials and responsible experience and education, will be eligible for this certificate.

After further consultation with the field the Department plans to bring draft regulations for the proposals described above to the Board of Regents in September, and we anticipate Regents action in November. We believe that these efforts will effectively meet the needs of the educational community as reflected in our recent discussions with the field, and will meet the Regents goal of ensuring qualified leaders for the State’s schools.

Colleges with questions about the information in this memo should contact Richard Gervais of the Office of College and University Evaluation at (518) 474-1551. School districts and other interested parties should contact Robert Bentley of the Office of Teaching Initiatives at (518) 474-4661.

We appreciate the contributions of all groups who worked with us to develop the educational leadership examinations and who provided substantial input on the proposed regulatory amendments. I look forward to our continuing conversations and collaboration regarding these matters.

cc: Thomas Rogers, New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS)  
Steven VanHoesen, New York State Association of School Business Officials (NYSASBO)  
Kevin Casey, School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS)  
Brian Gibbons, New York State Federation of School Administrators (NYSFSA)  
Anita Gomez-Palacio, New York City Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA-NYC)  
Timothy Kremer, New York State School Boards Association  
Maria Neira, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)  
Paula Nassif, NES/Pearson Evaluation  
Johanna Duncan-Poitier  
Robert G. Bentley  
Barbara D. Meinert  
Richard Gervais  
Sanford Lake