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Memorandum

TO: School District Superintendents
School District Certification Officers

FROM: Jim Warford

DATE: August 24, 2004

SUBJECT: Special Educator Certification Provisions for School Districts Impacted by Hurricane Charley

The employees of the Department of Education continue to extend our deepest sympathies to the individuals that have experienced devastating losses as a result of the catastrophic hurricane. Our priority is to provide support and assistance necessary to school systems to get all schools and programs fully operational as soon as possible.

We realize that there may be special situations relating to educator certification for which there is authority granted to the Commissioner in Section 1012.56(14), Florida Statutes, to make decisions under extenuating circumstance not provided for in law or rule. Additionally, the certification statutes already provide for certificate extensions under special circumstances for Temporary or Professional Certificates. Section 1012.24, Florida Statutes, also provides authority to school boards for the employment and compensation of instructional personnel during specific emergencies. The following flexibility options are offered to school districts that may have employees who because of these unforeseen circumstances are unable to complete certification requirements by their specified time lines.

If you need clarification or questions answered, please contact Beverly Gregory, Chief, Educator Certification, at 850/245-0431.

JIM WARFORD
Chancellor
K-12 Public Schools

Employment and Compensation of Instructional Personnel During Specific Emergencies:

Pursuant to Section 1012.24, Florida Statutes, upon recommendation of the superintendent, a district school board may declare that an emergency exists in that there are not sufficient numbers of teachers who are certified to continue school operations. The school board may then employ, contract, and compensate for instructional services to a person deemed qualified by school board regulations. Such persons shall not be required to have a state certificate.

Time Extension for General Knowledge Examination Passing Score:

Pursuant to Section 1012.56(14), Florida Statutes, the Commissioner is authorizing a district school board as recommended by the superintendent to grant to an employee who has been impacted by the hurricane and who is required to pass the certification General Knowledge Examination within the first year of employment in order to continue teaching, an additional one-year extension to the individual's time line to earn the passing examination score. Documentation of the time extension shall be placed in the personnel file indicating the extended date for compliance under these extraordinary circumstances.

Temporary Waivers of Completion of Inservice/College Credit for Out-of-Field Requirements:

Pursuant to Section 1012.56(14), Florida Statutes, the Commissioner is authorizing a district school board, as recommended by the superintendent to grant to an employee who has been impacted by the hurricane and who is required to earn inservice or college credit pursuant to Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC for continued authorization to teach, a waiver of the 6 semester hours or 120 inservice points for appointment for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years. Documentation of the waiver and time extension shall be placed in the personnel file indicating the school board approved waiver for compliance under these extraordinary circumstances.

Extensions to Temporary and Professional Certificates:

The attached form is provided to simplify the process to request extensions to a Temporary or Professional Certificate as authorized by Sections 1012.56 and 1012.585, Florida Statutes. Because of the very unfortunate circumstances that may have resulted in financial hardship, the \$56 fee usually required for processing these certificate extensions will be waived pursuant to the authority in Section 1012.56(14), Florida Statutes.

Issuance of a Duplicate Certificate:

The attached form may also be used to request issuance by the Bureau of Educator Certification of a duplicate certificate to replace a certificate that was lost or destroyed as a result of the hurricane. Because of the very unfortunate circumstances that may have resulted in financial hardship, the \$20 fee usually required for issuing a duplicate certificate will be waived pursuant to the authority in Section 1012.56(14), Florida Statutes.