Teacher Certification: SMTE Policy ASPA E-Kit

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WHO CERTIFIES TEACHERS? AND HOW?

- State departments of education exercise oversight over teacher certification policy in several ways
  - Approval of teacher preparation institutions; rules for course requirements, number of fieldwork or student teaching hours, etc.
  - Rules for how a teacher can gain initial or continuing certification; tests to pass, subjects available to teach, grade bands (e.g., "K-5"), cost, renewal
- Federal oversight of teacher certification?
  - Under *No Child Left Behind,* states had to comply with requirements ensuring all teachers were "highly qualified" to teach in their subject area (compliance started around 2006)
  - With the passage of *Every Student Succeeds Act,* this provision and oversight was eliminated; now it's up to each state to define an "effective teacher"

HOW DO STATES CERTIFY MUSIC TEACHERS?

- There are a variety of approaches (based on 2016 data from the National Association for Music Education):
  - Most states (45) certify music teachers to teach all grades (e.g., K-12, PreK-12); the rest have grade band options (e.g., K-5, 6-12)
  - Most states (35) certify music teachers to teach any musical subject; the others certify by specialty (e.g., "K-12 instrumental music," "K-12 vocal/general")

A FEW IMPORTANT TEACHER CERTIFICATION POLICY ISSUES

- Certification that is "permissive":
  - A state may allow an "all subjects" certification for elementary classroom teachers, and this can make them eligible to teach art, music, and/or physical education in place of a certified specialist teacher in those areas
- Reciprocity can be a concern:
  - Although 46 states and DC share some kind of reciprocity, it can still be onerous and expensive to gain licensure in a new state
- The rise of portfolio assessments:
  - States are beginning to use third-party portfolio teaching assessments in teacher certification. The most popular of these, the edTPA,which stands for teacher performance assessment, is now used in more than 40 states, with 18 states requiring edTPA passage for initial certification. This move has been controversial for a number of reasons, with many perceiving it as a move to outsource certification decisions.
- Alternative certification paths emerge:
  - Under alternative certification paths, teachers who did not complete a traditional prep program can enter the classroom immediately, while concurrently completing coursework and clinical experiences

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Information on music certification practices by states, gathered by the National Association for Music Education in 2016: https://nafme.org/music-education-certification-licensure/
- Information on how federal education law addresses teacher requirements: http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2018/07/essa_highly_qualified_teacher_effective_evaluation.html
- To learn more about the edTPA portfolio and its adoption: http://edtpa.aacte.org