

## **A Brief Sketch of the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education From 1967 to 1997**

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### **1967 - 1979**

The Nebraska Council on Teacher Education, from 1967 to 1979, continued to serve as a voluntary association dedicated to excellence in Nebraska education through quality teacher and administrator preparation and certification, public and legislative support for education, improvement of admission standards, dissemination regarding supply and demand, and advising the State Board of Education in all related matters. The Council had five Standing committees: I. College Program Approval, II. Certification, III. General Education, IV. Undergraduate Endorsement, and V. Graduate Endorsements. The State Board of Education approved the membership on Committees I and II thus giving them official status, while the others were strictly voluntary.

### **1979 - 1987**

By 1974 the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education had grown to more than 100 members as more and more statewide interest groups sought representation. Each college/university teacher education program had representation based on the number of degrees offered by the institution, e.g., those offering only a baccalaureate degree had two representatives while those offering a masters degree had three representatives and the University of Nebraska - Lincoln and the University of Nebraska at Omaha each had four representatives. The teachers of Nebraska were officially represented by six teachers, although others served on the Council as part of the Professional Practices Commission, or as part of one of the statewide interest groups. In 1979, under the leadership of Commissioner Anne Campbell, the composition of the Council was modified to give equal representation to practicing teachers, higher education, and school governance, each having 34 official representatives, as well as those who would serve as representatives of interested organizations. Thus the Council grew to 150 members.

By 1987, the State Board of Education became concerned about the large number of members, the financial costs of funding Committees I and II, and the legality of the Council making College Program Approval decisions based on the "Policies and Criteria" manual which did not have legal status. In order to make the whole Council a legally constituted body, functioning on behalf of the State Board of Education, two major changes had to occur: one, the number of representatives had to be drastically reduced, and two, the "Policies and Criteria" manual had to be translated into legal Rules approved by the State Board of Education. The "Policies and Criteria" manual became Rule 20: "Regulations for the Approval of Teacher Education Programs; Rule 21: "Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Counsel, Supervise and Administer in Nebraska Schools" and Rule 24: "Regulations for Certificate Endorsements."

In the reorganization of the Council to reduce the membership, the equal representation from college/university teacher preparation programs, practicing teachers, and governance was preserved, but reduced to 15 members for each; there would be one representative from the Nebraska Parent-Teacher Association, all other organizations would be excluded; and there would be one representative from the Nebraska Department of Education.

On September 8, 1995, the State Board of Education made a few modifications in the NCTE Organizational Policies. Therefore, currently, based on one representative from each teacher preparation institution and one representative from the Nebraska Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the number of representatives from each constituent group is 17. Sixteen practicing teachers are nominated by the Nebraska State Education Association, and one is nominated by the State Board of Education. Governance is divided into four representatives nominated by the Nebraska Association of School Boards, twelve are nominated by the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and one is nominated by the Nebraska Council on American Private Education. There is one representative from the Nebraska Parent-Teacher Association, and two representatives from the Nebraska Department of Education. Thus the council now functions with 54 members; all of whom must be approved by the State Board of Education.

The Committee structure was condensed from five Standing Committees to three: Certification, Undergraduate endorsements, and Graduate Endorsements. The work of the previous Certification and General Education Committees was combined into the new Certification Committee, and the work of the former College Program Approval Committee was taken on by the Full Council.

### **Recent Accomplishments**

Some of the recent accomplishments of the Council are:

1. Becoming a partner state with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. Such partnership has provided nationally recognized standards to be used in conjunction with state standards, reduced the costs for participating college/university teacher preparation institutions, and reduced the time involved for the institutions to demonstrate compliance with the high standards.
2. Increased the entrance requirements for admittance into a teacher education program.
3. Increased the communication and working relationships between college/university teacher preparation institutions and public and private K-12 schools. The Nebraska State Education Association members and college/university faculty members have worked toward systemic change in improving the quality of education in Nebraska.

4. Continued to establish high standards for the preparation of teachers and administrators through five-year reviews of the endorsements. In the past three years over 675 people, including administrators, school board members, teachers, specialists, parents, college/university education faculty, and representatives from the Nebraska Department of Education have worked in *ad hoc* committees to review and upgrade the endorsements.
5. Continued to advise the State Board of Education regarding teacher and administrator preparation, certification, and all related matters. The Council also has taken the State Board of Education policy statements and written them into Rules 20, 21, 23, and 24, e.g., the Board Reading/Writing policy is currently being translated into standards which will be incorporated into Rule 20; the Performance Based policy is being translated into Rule 24 as each endorsement is being reviewed, and Rules 20 and 21 will be reviewed and rewritten in the next four years to incorporate the Board's position.

The Council's future is strong. No other state in the nation has a similar Council which efficiently and effectively works for the establishment of high standards for teachers and administrators, monitors compliance, and works for statewide increased quality of education. No other state has colleges and universities that work in such harmonious and supportive ways, as well as working in harmony with the Nebraska State Education Association. It is because of these special relationships that statewide systemic change can and does occur in Nebraska.