Since the passage of Act 114 (24 PS 1-111 AS AMENDED), requiring FBI background checks for individuals working in public and private schools who have direct contact with school children, the Department has processed over 193,000 individual background checks. We can be proud of the efforts made by all of you to implement this Act to ensure the safety of our students. The Department continues to work with Cogent Systems, the FBI and the Pennsylvania State Police to improve our efficiency in processing the background checks.

The Act requires student teacher candidates assigned to all public and private schools, intermediate units (IUs) and Career and Technology Centers (CTCs) to obtain a Federal criminal history background check, prior to a student teacher candidate’s participation in any classroom teaching, internship, clinical or field experience. Recent questions regarding background check requirements for student teachers prompted the Department to issue the enclosed Questions and Answers.

The student teacher candidate is responsible for providing the report to the administrator of his or her educator preparation program. The administrator is responsible for maintaining a copy of the report and for verification to the public school, private school, IU or CTC, that the individual has been continuously enrolled in the educator preparation program.

If a student teacher candidate is continuously enrolled in an educator preparation program, the student teacher candidate would not be required to have a new background check each year. However, a new background check is required if the individual transfers from one program to another. If the first background check is less than one year old, it may be used for the new program.

The higher education institution will know if the student has skipped a semester or enrolled or transferred to another institution. When that occurs, the higher education institution is responsible for communicating with the student teacher as to that individual’s responsibility for obtaining a new FBI background check in order to have access to the public or private schools.

For information on how to apply for a Federal criminal history record; Questions and Answers and a link to Act 114, please visit the Department of Education website at the following address:

http://www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/cwp/view.asp?a=13&q=125828

Penn*Link
1. Does the law apply to “student teachers”?

Yes. Act 114 (24 PS 1-111 as amended) includes background check requirements for “student teacher candidates”, defined as an individual participating in a classroom teaching, internship, clinical or field experience who, as part of a program for the initial or advanced preparation of professional educators, performs classroom teaching or assists in the education program in a public or private school, Intermediate Unit (IU) or Career and Technology Center (CTC) under the supervision of educator preparation program faculty.

2. When is the background check required?

It is required prior to a student teacher candidate’s participation in any classroom teaching, internship, clinical or field experience.

3. To whom is the information provided and who maintains a copy?

The student teacher candidate provides the required Federal criminal history record to the administrator of his or her educator preparation program. The administrator of the educator preparation program is responsible for maintaining a copy. The penalty provisions of the Act are applicable to the administrator.

4. Does the law require the student teacher candidate to obtain a new background check each year?

No. If a student teacher candidate is continuously enrolled in an educator preparation program, the student teacher candidate would not be required to have a new background check each year.

5. When is the student teacher candidate required to obtain a new background check?

A new Federal criminal history record is required if the individual’s enrollment in an educator preparation program is interrupted or if that candidate transfers to another educator preparation program. However, if the first background check is less than one year old, it may be used for the new program.

6. Will student teacher candidates transferring from a Community College program to a College/University program need to submit new criminal reports? (Reprinted from PDE website, FAQs, Question No. 28)

A new background check is required if the individual transfers from one program to another. However, if the first background check is less than one year old, it may be used for the new program.

7. Who is required to verify that the student teacher candidate has been continuously enrolled?

The administrator of the student teacher candidate’s educator preparation program is responsible for verification to the public school, private school, IU or CTC that the individual has been continuously enrolled in the educator preparation program.

The higher education institution will know if the student has skipped a semester or enrolled or transferred to another institution. When that occurs, the higher education institution is responsible for communicating with the student teacher candidate as to that student’s responsibility for obtaining a new Federal background check.

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