

## **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **STAFF NOTE**

#### **Consent Item:**

Option 9 Application, Fort Thomas Independent Schools and Northern Kentucky University

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should approve the application.

#### **Rationale:**

Fort Thomas Independent Board of Education and Northern Kentucky University have submitted an Option 9 application that meets the requirements of KRS 161.048 and 16 KAR 9:110. Northern Kentucky University holds accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and their educator preparation programs have been approved by the EPSB.

#### **Applicable Statute or Regulation:**

KRS 161.028, KRS 161.048, 16 KAR 9:110

#### **History/Background:**

**Existing Policy:** KRS 161.048(10) establishes the Option 9 alternative route to certification. This route provides for the expedited certification of a person to teach at any grade level through a cooperative program between a college or university and a school district. The expedited certification program will result in a bachelor's degree and initial certification within three school years. The candidate is not certified while completing the route but shall complete a residency/paraprofessional component and receive coaching and mentoring from experienced teachers. 16 KAR 9:110 establishes the standards and procedures for Option 9 and contains sections covering providers, residency, field experience, student teaching, application review, continuance of program approval, revocation for cause, reconsideration, data reports, and professional certificates.

**Summary:** Fort Thomas Independent Schools has partnered with Northern Kentucky University to develop a proposed Option 9 program for Elementary Education and Special Education. In accordance with Section 5 of the regulation, staff has reviewed the application and found that it meets the requirements of KRS 161.048 and 16 KAR 9:110. A copy of the application is included in the Board Meeting Materials tab for EPSB review. As part of the proposal, each party has agreed to take on the following:

Fort Thomas Independent Schools will:

- Employ the participant in a residency or paraprofessional program within the school district for the duration of the program as long as the participant is making successful progress in the Option 9 program.
- Utilize experienced teachers employed by the district to provide coaching and mentoring to the participant.

- Ensure at least one mentor is certified in the area in which certification is being sought.
- Ensure the availability of funding for each participant for the duration of the candidate's participation in the program as long as the participant is making successful progress in the Option Nine program.
- Ensure at least one (1) year of employment provides hands-on experience in the area in which certification is being sought.
- Continue this partnership until the district's employed participants for Option 9 certification complete the program or are no longer employed by the district.
- Ensure that participants must apply to Northern Kentucky University as an undergraduate student.

Northern Kentucky University will:

- Advise participants on which classes to take in which semester.
- Ensure participants meet admission requirements as established by EPSB in 16 KAR 5:020.
- Offer classes in formats that are appropriate for the unique population of Option 9 students (online, in summer/winter institutes, on evenings or weekends).
- Follow EPSB guidelines for admission to an undergraduate, initial certification educator preparation program.
- Utilize work experience settings for fulfillment of student teaching expectations. (NKU may recommend, however, that participants teach or work in slightly varied settings, depending upon certification areas.)
- Ensure participants will be responsible for completing any state requirements necessary for certification in their program area(s).

In accordance with 16 KAR 9:110, Section 5, initial program approval will be for a period of three years. After that time, the providers may apply for continuing program approval and provide evidence of program quality.

***Budget Impact:*** There will be costs associated with the oversight of this route.

**Contact Person:**

Dr. Melissa Diebel, Academic Program Manager  
Division of Educator Preparation and Certification  
Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness  
(502) 564-4606  
Email: [melissa.diebel@education.ky.gov](mailto:melissa.diebel@education.ky.gov)