Clearance Policy for Master’s and Post Baccalaureate Candidates

Policy:
Act 24 of 2011, effective September 28, 2011, contains changes to the Pennsylvania Public School Code requiring updated background checks for employees and all persons who come into direct contact with children. All students, including M.Ed. candidates, supervision candidates, nondegree candidates, and post baccalaureate candidates must submit TB test and “current” criminal background clearances defined as being within one year of the issue date and extending through the duration of the field placement for any class requiring a field experience.

Candidates who are not employed by the school district in which a field requirement would be completed would submit the following “current” clearances to the Field Services Office, Stayer 120
1. Act 34, Criminal Record Check
2. Act 151, Child Abuse Clearance
3. Act 114, FBI Fingerprinting Clearance
4. TB test

Candidates who are currently employed in the school district in which they would complete the field requirement would follow this procedure.
1. Submit a signed Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form PDE-6004 (under Act 24 of 2011) and all clearances a candidate currently has. (Form PDE-6004 can be obtained from Field Services, Stayer 120).
2. Submit a “proof of employment” form developed by Field Services to verify that the candidate is currently employed in the district. It will be the responsibility of the candidate to secure the signature of the designated school district personnel.

Procedure:
1. Department chairs or program coordinators will send list of all graduate classes that contain a field requirement to Field Services.
2. Any class with a field component will have the clearance restriction listed with the course on the registration page such as “ACT 34/ACT 151/FBI clearances and TB test results are required.”
3. Upon admission to an M.Ed program, newly-admitted candidates will be notified that clearances will be required and the submission procedure to follow.
4. Program coordinators will notify candidates of any courses with a field component and the clearance policy.
5. Field Services will notify students with no or outdated clearances.

The major problem with the above requirements is tracking. We are currently not tracking master level field experiences nor do we even know how many there are or in which courses. Permitting the signed 6004 form will increase the time required to track students in several ways. First, we will need to identify courses and check clearances for all students in those master level courses. Second, we will need to identify those who are completing the field experience in their own classrooms. The feeling is that a uniform policy would lessen the time needed to track students. Permitting exceptions, increases work and time for an already overworked staff and utilizes time needed for finding placements.

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