PREFACE

This Pennsylvania Certification Manual, a revision of the 1988 Pennsylvania Certification Manual, Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines, is presented by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to provide guidance in complying with laws and regulations governing certification and staffing practices in our schools. Additional certification related sections might become part of this manual in the future.

The Pennsylvania Public School Code and the Administrative Code charge the Department and the State Board of Education with numerous responsibilities regarding the certification and staffing assignments of professional school personnel. The dissemination of the policies and guidelines in this manual clarify: 1) how schools are expected to comply with certification and staffing laws, regulations, court decisions, opinions of the Attorney General, administrative agency policy and administrative decisions of appeals taken from local educational agency hearings, 2) staffing assignment capacity, and 3) how schools can promote student performance in staffing approaches.

During the course of any school year the Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation is asked to clarify and advise on a variety of certification and staffing issues. To provide consistency in enforcing the laws and regulations pertaining to these matters, the first edition of written policy and guideline statements, known as "Professional Personnel Certification and Staffing Policies and Guidelines" and commonly referred to as CSPGs was distributed to all schools in 1975. CSPGs, in essence, provide a "job description" base for professional educators.

As new laws were enacted, regulations revised, and department policies changed, it has become necessary to revise CSPGs over the years. The several dates listed on individual CSPGs in this new edition reflect the original and revised dates on each of these statements.

This edition of certification and staffing policies and guidelines supersedes all previously issued CSPG statements. From this printing date forward, any new or revised CSPGs will be distributed formally by the Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation as additional or replacement pages to be placed in "The Pennsylvania Certification Manual." Keeping this material up-to-date will: 1) clarify current department policies and guidelines followed by the Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation in advising schools of appropriate certification and staffing practices, and 2) clarify information used by School Auditors to ascertain appropriate hirings and assignments.

It should also be noted that throughout this publication reference is made that qualification for assignment is the possession of a certificate endorsed for a subject or area appropriate to that assignment. Accordingly the reference is intended to convey the assumption that the certificate is a legally qualifying document, issued in accordance with regulatory requirements and is currently in a valid status.

Beginning with school year 2004-2005, each school should use this publication as a certification and staffing policy guide as a means to help achieve educational excellence through proper certification and staffing practices.