

New teachers may face compet

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College graduates will have to prove they know their ABCs before they will be allowed to teach in Ohio schools if the State Board of Education has its way.

The board, which this month mandated competency tests for students in Ohio, plans to bring the general assembly to demand that new teachers also take a competency test before entering the classroom.

ROBERT BOWERS, assistant superintendent of the State Department of Education, said the proposal would affect only teachers who apply for certification to teach in Ohio. College graduates, entering in education, are the primary group that would be required to take the test. The proposal would not affect those who are already teaching.

Presently, the state automatically certifies teachers who receive degrees in education from an approved study program.

Bowers compared the idea of teacher testing to the state licensing examinations now given to nurses, accountants and real estate agents.

The type of test proposed by the board of education would examine prospective teachers on their command of the basics—English and math, their knowledge of the subject they would teach, and their teaching skills.

BOWERS NOTED that the idea of testing teacher competency has swept the nation in recent years. About 17 states now administer such tests.

"It seems to be growing in popularity," Bowers said. "I think the lay public supports it strongly."

Milton Partridge, chairman of the education

department of Xavier University, said he was "supportive" of teacher testing. So was Gideonse, dean of the college of education at the University of Cincinnati. Gideonse, however, he was concerned about how the test would be designed, exactly what it would test, and how it would be administered.

"There are a lot of very delicate issues that need to be answered," Gideonse said.

THE AMERICAN Federation of Teachers, though not opposed to teacher testing, is concerned about the design and administration of a test, according to Cincy Mahoney, a representative for the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers.

"The federation has said for many years that we want to upgrade the profession," Mahoney said.

Bowers said the state board's proposal was specific about how the test would be administered.