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Board approves revamp of Indiana teacher licensing

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**By DEANNA MARTIN
Associated Press Writer**

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The state panel overseeing teacher licensing has approved new rules Indiana's state superintendent says will allow future educators to spend less time learning how to teach and more time focused on subject matter.

The Division of Professional Standards Advisory Board on Thursday approved the proposal, which had drawn sharp opposition from universities and others who said Superintendent Tony Bennett shouldn't dictate college curriculums.

The board made several changes to the proposal in an effort to compromise, and Bennett said Thursday he was proud of the final product.

"We crafted these changes with the belief that students' academic success is determined, in large part, by the quality of their teachers," Bennett said. "These new rules for licensing go further than ever before to make sure all Indiana's school children receive the high-quality instruction they deserve."

Gov. Mitch Daniels, also a Republican, also praised the new rules.

"The single best way to have better prepared kids is to have better prepared teachers," Daniels said in a statement.

The original proposal would have required elementary education majors to take no more than 30 college credit hours in teaching methods. That limit was later eliminated, a move Indiana University School of Education Dean Gerardo Gonzalez said was a fair compromise.

"The faculty really should be in charge of the curriculum," Gonzalez said. "Not having credit limits allow the faculty flexibility."

The original proposal would have required those who want to become high school math teachers, for example, to major in math and minor in education. Currently, college students can major in education and take some classes in math to qualify as secondary math teachers. Education schools complained that such a change would essentially destroy their secondary education majors.

The rule approved Thursday allows students who want to be high school teachers to major in secondary education, but only if a college's secondary education program meets or exceeds the content requirements of a specific subject major, such as math or physics. The Department of Education said that compromise worked because it still ensures that teachers learn about the subject they will eventually teach.

The rules also will make it easier for school boards to hire superintendents who have had nontraditional career paths. And they will allow current teachers to apply certain professional development programs toward license renewal, possibly saving them money on tuition-based courses.

The Department of Education said the new rules take effect July 31, but they will not affect education majors who graduate

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