Clausen says more will pass NTE

By JOHN LAPIANTE
Capitol news bureau

"A couple of hundred" more potential teachers will be able to pass the state teacher test this year because some of the cutoff scores have been lowered, Education Superintendent Tom Clausen said Tuesday.

He said the new passing scores on the National Teacher Examinations will help alleviate the shortage of teachers in Louisiana classrooms.

"Right now we have about 800 uncertified teachers in the classroom," Clausen told reporters.

"If we can close that gap some by lowering the score some, I think it will help," he said.

Clausen said a study group appointed by former Superintendent Kelly Nix recommended the lower cutoff scores for education graduates hoping to teach math, social studies, business, French and special education.

The committee also recommended increasing the passing score on the test for English teachers, but Clausen decided to keep the lower score. Cutoff scores for all other areas also remain unchanged.

Thousands of graduates of Louisiana's colleges of education have failed the test since it became a requirement for teacher certification in 1978.

Last fall about 36 percent of the would-be teachers who took the NTE failed to achieve the higher cutoff scores that were set by Nix last year.

Asked about the effect of the lower cutoff scores in the five areas, Clausen said he didn't have exact figures.

But, he said:

"I think it's going to give us some more teachers in the classroom who are missing it by a little bit..."

He said "a couple of hundred" more graduates should pass the test this year because some of the cutoff scores have been lowered, Education Superintendent Tom Clausen said Tuesday.

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