



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Commissioner

June 3, 2015

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
School Leaders

ROUTE TO: Human Resources Staff

FROM: Peter Shulman, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Talent Officer
Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

SUBJECT: Update to Proposed Changes to Teacher Preparation and Certification Requirements

On February 4, 2015 the New Jersey Department of Education (“the Department”) proposed significant changes to state requirements for teacher preparation and certification based upon national research, local stakeholder recommendations – including our higher education community – and feedback from current and prospective New Jersey educators. At that time, we released a broadcast memo outlining the proposed changes and describing the related research and rationale. We have now updated this memo to detail the educator outreach and engagement we conducted from February to June that has resulted in improvements to the original proposal.

As we implement better and more rigorous standards, assessments, and evaluations across New Jersey, we must ensure that we prepare novice teachers to meet these demands and effectively serve students from day one. We can leverage preparation and certification requirements to ensure strong candidates enter preparation programs, receive quality instruction, and demonstrate appropriate performance as novice teachers. We can use candidate and programmatic data to provide more insight into our preparation programs and new teacher supports in both pre-professional and professional learning settings. This regulatory proposal focuses on four main areas, each described in more detail below:

1. [Strong Candidates Entering the Profession](#)
2. [Updated Preparation Requirements](#)
3. [Demonstrated Individual Performance](#)
4. [Program Data and Support](#)

In order to ensure preparation programs, school districts, and teacher candidates have adequate notice to adjust to these changes, we have proposed a multi-year phase-in of the requirements and will continue to work with these groups to support their implementation plans and processes.

Background

Within the educator lifecycle, no one factor in isolation will ensure all New Jersey students have access to a great teacher. Over the past several years, we have focused on developing existing teachers through improved evaluation and professional support systems. To complement these efforts, we are proposing changes to enhance the effectiveness of novice teachers through preparation and certification.

In recent years, national leaders have been calling for changes to teacher preparation based on research findings and educator feedback. Studies show that on average, teachers with some experience are more effective than brand new teachers,¹ that teachers improve their performance the most early in their careers,² and that the largest positive change in impact on student achievement occurs in the first one or two years of a teacher's career.³ Several of the recent research activities calling for changes to teacher preparation include:

- November 2010: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) blue ribbon report⁴ calls for states recommending a revamping of educator preparation curriculum to integrate coursework and theory into extended practical experiences in a classroom setting.
- September 2011: United States Department of Education report⁵ calls for states and the federal government to collaborate on improvements to teacher recruitment and preparation.
- December 2012: Council of Chief State School Officers calls for states to strengthen licensure requirements and program approval and accountability measures for preparation providers.⁶
- May 2013: Center for Teaching Quality calls for all teacher candidates to complete a performance assessment, a cohort-based residency, and a competency-driven preparation program to better prepare all candidates to become effective teachers.⁷
- September 2014: Alliance for Excellent Education and National Opportunity to Learn Campaign call for state policies to improve clinical experiences and partnerships between preparation programs and local schools, and for a performance assessment prior to certification.⁸

Most recently, **the U.S. Department of Education (USED) proposed rules to improve teacher preparation**; these rules call on states to develop data systems to identify preparation program performance and to transition from input-focused reporting requirements to more meaningful outcome measures.⁹ Our state has already developed and is continually improving data systems to differentiate program performance. Additionally, USED's proposed rules align directionally to the package described in this memo.

Key education leaders in New Jersey have also called for improvements to our supports to novice teachers. In late September 2014, the Garden State Alliance for Strengthening Education (GSASE)

¹ Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2006

² Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007

³ Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff, & Wyckoff, 2008 and Harris and Sass, 2007

⁴ *Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice: a National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers*

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, *Our Future, Our Teachers*, 2011: <http://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/our-future-our-teachers.pdf>

⁶ Council of Chief State School Officers, *Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession*, 2012: http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2012/Our%20Responsibility%20Our%20Promise_2012.pdf

⁷ Center for Teaching Quality, *Teaching 2030: Leveraging Teacher Preparation 2.0*:

http://www.teachingquality.org/sites/default/files/TEACHING_2030_Leveraging_Teacher_Preparation.pdf

⁸ Alliance for Excellent Education, *Climate Change: Improving School Climate by Supporting Great Teaching*, 2014:

<http://all4ed.org/reports-factsheets/climatechange4/>

⁹ For more information on ED's proposed rules, see <http://www.ed.gov/teacherprep?src=rotator>

released a report with recommendations to “support effective teaching in New Jersey.”¹⁰ Many of the changes the Department has proposed echo these recommendations and demonstrate our collaborative support for educators in this important work. We are pleased that our continued engagement with many members of this Alliance over the past several years has resulted in so many common goals.

Over the past two years and more intensely in the past few months, Department staff members have engaged with stakeholders across the state through more than 90 meetings. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the groups listed below and many others.

- The Garden State Alliance for Strengthening Education (GSASE)
- All educator preparation program providers producing Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) candidates in New Jersey
- All educator preparation program providers for Certificate of Eligibility (CE) candidates in New Jersey
- Other Stakeholders (NSPSA, NJASA, NJSBA, NJEA, Bilingual Advisory Committee, CTE Advisory Group, NJ State Special Education Advisory Council, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, NJ Council of Vocational-Technical Schools, Source4Teachers)

These interactions resulted in improvements to our original proposal as well as the following **important terminology changes directly requested by educator preparation programs**:

- To describe the types of preparation programs in New Jersey leading to the two types of initial certification, we have changed the term “traditional route” program to “Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) educator preparation program (EPP)” and the term “alternate route” program to “Certificate of Eligibility (CE) educator preparation program (EPP).”
- We have changed the term “practicum” to “clinical experience,” the term “student teaching” to “clinical practice,” the term “student teacher” to “clinical intern,” and the term “collegiate-faculty” to “clinical supervisor.” The new umbrella term “clinical component” will be used to refer to all field-based experiences occurring during teacher preparation.

1. Strong Candidates Entering the Profession

In June 2014, the State Board adopted **higher GPA and basic skills assessment requirements** for those entering teacher preparation programs. The package introduced in 2015 fosters equity between CE and CEAS educator preparation requirements to enable all EPPs to focus on content and pedagogical training, not basic skills remediation.

2. Updated Preparation Requirements

All teacher candidates deserve a high-quality preparation that is grounded in classroom experience. Our proposed regulations will better prepare novice teachers to handle the challenges of P-12 work and enable them to be more effective in the earlier years of their careers. Further, we seek to require more rigorous and extensive clinical work prior to the clinical experience to support the most effective classroom exposure for candidates.

CE Educator Preparation Program Structure

Currently, CE educator preparation candidates can face various program interruptions. The state does not require a coherent sequence of programming for CE EPPs, which can result in a disjointed

¹⁰ Garden State Alliance for Strengthening Education, *Designing a Continuum to Support Effective Teaching in New Jersey, 2014*: <http://assets.njspotlight.com/assets/14/0928/2133>

preparation experience. The Department aims to have **a single provider prepare a candidate from beginning to end with high-quality programming**. This enables richer pre-service and sequenced in-service learning that can include both coursework and classroom-based support aligned to professional standards.

Clinical Component

Research shows that preparation programs that offer opportunities for candidates to engage in the clinical aspects of teaching produce novice teachers with greater student achievement gains in year one.¹¹ Studies also recommend that candidates engage with a range of students and placements prior to entering the profession.¹² The American Federation of Teachers (AFT),¹³ Association of American of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE),¹⁴ and NCATE¹⁵ all agree that a majority of preparation should be clinical in nature. Further, AACTE, NCATE, and Educators4Excellence all believe that to ensure a quality clinical experience, teacher candidates must be overseen by strong experienced teachers.¹⁶ Therefore, in alignment with the GSASE, which calls for teacher candidates to receive “real-world field and clinical experiences,”¹⁷ we propose to:

- **Improve the clinical experience candidates have in schools and classrooms prior to their culminating full-time clinical practice;**
- Improve incentives to **encourage highly skilled cooperating teachers** to work with clinical interns;
- **Increase the duration and quality of clinical experiences – notably requiring a full year of the clinical component progressing from part-time to full-time;** and
- Increase **flexibility for programs to promote an innovative, standards-based preparation curriculum.**

To learn more about proposed preparation changes, see the following:

- [Overview of Current and Proposed Changes to CEAS Educator Preparation Requirements](#)
- [Overview of Current and Proposed Changes to CE Educator Preparation Requirements](#)

3. Demonstrated Individual Performance

In order to promote effective educators obtaining standard certification, we believe **candidates must demonstrate mastery of important competencies throughout the initial years of teaching before earning the certification**. The changes proposed would mean that all New Jersey teachers, no matter which pathway they take into the classroom, will be required to demonstrate rigorous teaching competencies.

¹¹ Boyd, et al. (2008), *Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement*:

<http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Preparation%20and%20Achievement.pdf>

¹² AACTE (2010), *Clinical Preparation of Teachers*: http://aacte.org/pdf/Government_Relations/Clinical%20Prep%20Paper_03-11-2010.pdf and Levine (2006), *Educating School Teachers*: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504144.pdf>

¹³ AFT (2013), *Raising the Bar*: <http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/raisingthebar2013.pdf>

¹⁴ AACTE (2010), *Clinical Preparation of Teachers*: http://aacte.org/pdf/Government_Relations/Clinical%20Prep%20Paper_03-11-2010.pdf

¹⁵ NCATE (2010), *Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice*: <http://www.ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=zzeiB1OoqPk%3d&tabid=715>

¹⁶ Educators4Excellence (2013), *Preparing for the classroom*: http://educators4excellence.s3.amazonaws.com/8/74/f/1637/E4E_NY_TPrep_Paper.pdf

¹⁷ Garden State Alliance for Strengthening Education (2014), *Designing a Continuum to Support Effective Teaching in New Jersey*: <http://assets.njspotlight.com/assets/14/0928/2133>

Standard Certification Requirements

All candidates would be required to **demonstrate Effective or Highly Effective performance on the state evaluation system (AchieveNJ)** and to **pass a performance-based assessment of teaching** prior to standard certification. **Stronger reciprocity requirements** would ensure out-of-state candidates meet a similar high bar as in-state candidates. This approach supports the GSASE's recommendation that a "valid and reliable performance assessment or criteria for performance assessment" be integrated into the program structure that ensures "competencies are learned in a systemic approach aligned to the InTASC standards."¹⁸

Substitute Requirements

We propose to **more strictly monitor the limit on how long a substitute without any educator preparation may serve in one classroom**. This will help ensure that students taught by substitutes for longer periods of time benefit from these periods of instruction.

To learn more about proposed certification and substitute requirements, see the following:

- [Overview of Proposed Changes to Certification Requirements](#)
- [Overview of Proposed Changes to Substitute Requirements](#)

4. Program Data and Support

In April of 2014, the Department released the first public [Educator Preparation Provider Annual Reports \(EPPARs\)](#). This is part of our ongoing effort to provide programs, teacher candidates, and districts with transparent performance data. Our ultimate vision is a comprehensive database that includes information from a teacher's preparation experience throughout his or her New Jersey public school teaching career. To complement this effort, we propose to:

- **Clarify expectations and criteria for initial program approval and periodic review** for all educator preparation programs;
- **Enhance the initial approval process** to ensure all programs are standards-based and thoroughly reviewed including by peers and experts;
- **Publish comprehensive data** to inform teacher candidates, programs, districts, and the Department; and
- **Require comprehensive program reviews**.

Other Changes

In addition to the four main areas of focus described above, we have proposed to address rules that would otherwise expire and to streamline the regulation code.

Principal and School Administrator Residency Requirements

Current requirements for principal and school administrator residency programs are set to expire in 2015. As part of the package of proposed changes, we seek to address educator requests to make residency programs more flexible and more individualized to the candidate. **The major change proposed to both residency programs is a shift from a fixed curriculum to an individualized program of support for each candidate based on his/her preparation and past work experience and guided by a mentor**. An additional change to just the principal residency calls for the mentor to

¹⁸ Garden State Alliance for Strengthening Education (2014), *Designing a Continuum to Support Effective Teaching in New Jersey*: <http://assets.njspotlight.com/assets/14/0928/2133>

seek input from the candidate's direct supervisor to help inform the recommendation for standard certification.

To learn more about these proposed changes, see the following:

- [Overview of Proposed Changes to Principal Residency Requirements](#)
- [Overview of Proposed Changes to School Administrator Residency Requirements](#)

Administrative Code Reorganization

Based on strong feedback from the field requesting clarity around candidate and program requirements, we have:

- Reorganized the former Chapter 9 of the Administrative Code into four subject-specific areas;¹⁹
- Separated educator preparation program requirements from candidate requirements;
- Reorganized the subject-specific (endorsement) requirements to highlight similarities and critical differences among the study requirements for specific instructional endorsements; and
- Aligned language for program approval of both traditional and alternate route programs.

Next Steps

The regulatory package is now at the proposal level with the State Board of Education. We look forward to continued engagement with stakeholders as we all work together to support New Jersey teachers and students.

c: Members, State Board of Education
David Hespe, Commissioner
Senior Staff
Diane Shoener
Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors of Regional Achievement Centers
Executive County Business Officials
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group
Deans and Directors of New Jersey Institutes of Higher Education

¹⁹ Please see this [August 5, 2014 Chapter 9 Recodification memo](#) for more details on the administrative changes.