



State of New Jersey

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TO: Chief School Administrators
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FROM: Peter Shulman, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Talent Officer *PS*
Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

SUBJECT: Proposed Regulations on Professional Teaching Standards, Evaluation of Provisional Certification, and Mentoring

On August 7, 2013 the Department of Education proposed regulatory changes to the State Board as part of a broader effort focused on addressing the professional lifecycle of an educator. Our goal is to establish a licensure system based on professional standards for pre-service preparation, certification, and professional development that serves to continuously improve the quality of instruction to equip New Jersey students for success in college and career. The proposed amendments fall under Professional Licensure and Standards in Chapter 9 of the Administrative Code, although the topics are somewhat diverse. The purpose of this memo is to share more information about each of these proposed changes.

I. Proposed Regulations for Professional Standards for Teachers (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.3)

The New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers identify the knowledge, skills, and disposition teachers need to practice responsibly. Proposed regulations would update the Professional Standards for Teachers by incorporating current research on teaching practice and new understandings of learners and the learning process. The proposed standards align to the 2011 [InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#) and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and provide a clear vision of what teachers need to help all students prepare for success in college and the workforce. Our state-approved teacher practice evaluation instruments and preparation program curricula already align with the 2011 InTASC standards.

The key themes across the standards emphasize essential practices for improved achievement of all students, as detailed below:

Key Themes	Rationale
Students' Application of Knowledge and Skills	Teachers need to support students in acquiring 21 st -century skills and meeting more rigorous content standards by designing learning opportunities which incorporate the use of high-order skills to solve real-world problems.
Personalized Learning for Diverse Learners	Teachers must be able to customize learning for students with a range of individual differences.
Assessment Literacy	Teachers must have the skills to develop a range of assessments and to use assessment data to improve instruction.
Collaborative Professional Culture	Teachers, administrators, and others share responsibility for student learning; teaching is not done in isolation.
Teacher Leadership	Teachers must actively investigate and share new ideas to advance the profession; teachers advocate for student needs.

II. Proposed Regulations for Evaluation of Provisional Certificate (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.2)

The Department proposed minor changes to the requirements for the provisional teaching program so the required timelines for observations of novice provisional teachers align with statutory observation requirements in TEACHNJ. Currently, each observation must occur within a certain number of weeks. Under proposed regulations, each non-tenured teaching staff member must be observed and evaluated at least three times during each school year but not less than once during each semester. This is intended to reduce administrative burdens and provide districts discretion to determine when observations can be conducted in a teacher's first year.

In addition, this section of code describes the requirements for a State-approved district training program. As a technical change only, the Department proposes to rename the "State-approved district training program" as the "provisional teacher program," also known as the alternate route.

III. Proposed Regulations for Mentoring (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.3-8.4)

The Department proposes to amend the rules for the mentoring of new teachers to better align with the educator support requirements in the TEACHNJ Act of 2012. These amendments also align the rules for mentoring new teachers with current research and best practices. Proposed changes also reduce district reporting burdens and promote flexibility and accountability for district implementation.

To align with TEACHNJ requirements, proposed regulations expand the scope of support which districts must provide to all new teachers, both novice teachers under the provisional teacher program and experienced teachers new to a district. Under the proposed changes, individual 1-1 mentoring will still be required for novice teachers. In addition, all non-tenured teachers will receive support which is

individualized, developed collaboratively by the supervisor and teacher, and aligned with State standards and school/district expectations for teacher effectiveness.

A comprehensive district mentoring program aims to:

- Assist first-year teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching;
- Reduce novice teacher attrition;
- Improve the effectiveness of new teachers; and
- Enhance teacher knowledge of, and strategies related to, the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) and CCSS to facilitate student achievement and growth.

Proposed amendments require districts to ensure that mentors have the necessary **training and experience** to serve in this role. Specifically, under new requirements the mentor teacher must:

- Be certified (in the subject area in which the novice provisional teacher is working, when possible);
- Have been teaching for at least three years, including two out of the last five years to ensure the teacher's experience reflects a current understanding of the profession;
- Demonstrate a record of success in the classroom, receiving a summative rating of Effective or Highly Effective beginning in 2014-2015 school year;
- Complete a comprehensive training program including the Professional Standards for Teachers, the CCSS, the district's teaching evaluation instrument, classroom observation skills, facilitating adult learning, and leading reflective conversations about teaching practice; and
- *Not* serve as the mentee's direct supervisor nor conduct evaluations of teachers (this reflects provisions for teachers as evaluators in the TEACHNJ Act to protect the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship and the integrity of the teacher evaluation process).

The proposed amendments would **require an individual mentor teacher to:**

- Work 1-1 with a novice provisional teacher;
- Provide observation and feedback, opportunities for the novice teacher to observe effective practice, and confidential guidance and support in accordance with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers; and
- Guide the novice teacher in performing a self assessment on the district's teaching practice evaluation instrument.

The proposed amendment includes additional **procedural changes**, including:

- A minimum mentoring requirement during the critical first weeks of employment (including at least one session/week);
- Differentiated supports for teachers who have had prior clinical experiences (holders of the Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing) with those who have not (holders of the Certificate of Eligibility);
- A log to record all contact time between the mentor teacher and the novice provisional teacher (this must be submitted to and maintained within the district to help inform implementation of mentoring activities – the Department will provide a template); and

- The prohibition of direct payment from mentee to mentor, as such payment should be monitored and handled by the district's administrative office. Central office payments allow districts to check time logs before issuing payments and provide better accountability without increasing financial burden for mentoring.

Proposed **changes to governance and accountability for district mentoring programs** are intended to reduce procedural burdens on districts, as recommended by the Governor's Education Transformation Task Force, including:

- The chief school administrator (CSA) – rather than the Local Professional Development Committee – must develop a plan to implement the district mentoring program;
- The CSA must submit the mentoring plan to the district board of education for review of its fiscal impact; the mentoring plan will then remain in the district;
- The CSA must share the district mentoring plan with each School Improvement Panel (ScIP) which then oversees school-level implementation of the plan;
- The CSA must review the plan annually and revise it as necessary based on the mentoring logs, feedback from the ScIPs, and data on teacher and student performance each year; and
- The CSA must provide to the Department a statement of assurance that the district is meeting the requirements for the mentoring program.

For questions or feedback about professional development and mentoring requirements, please email teachpd@doe.state.nj.us or call 609-292-9556.

Thank you for your attention to this information, and for your collaboration in our work to support and promote effective educators in New Jersey.

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