

PUBLIC NOTICE

EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking

State Board of Examiners and Certification

Requirements for Certificates of Eligibility (CE)

N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3

Petitioner: Angelo Marocco.

Take notice that on April 24, 2019, the New Jersey State Board of Education (State Board) received a petition for rulemaking from the above petitioner, requesting the State Board of Education amend N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3 to eliminate the grade point average (GPA) requirement for a candidate to be eligible for a certificate of eligibility (CE) in instructional areas.

The petitioner specifically requests the State Board adopt amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3 to delete the requirement for a candidate to have a 3.0 GPA to be eligible for a CE. Instead, the petitioner stated that the rules should allow anyone who has a bachelor's degree from an accredited higher education institution to be eligible for a CE and to enroll in an educator preparation program.

N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3 requires a candidate graduating on or after September 1, 2016, to have achieved a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 when a GPA of 4.00 equals an A grade in a baccalaureate degree program, higher degree program, or a State-approved post-baccalaureate certification program with a minimum of 13 semester-hour credits. A candidate who graduated before September 1, 2016, was required to have a GPA of at least 2.75. The section allows a candidate who graduated on or after September 1, 2016, to have a GPA that is at least 2.75 if his

or her score on the appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge exceeds the passing score by 10 percent or more.

The section also allows a candidate who graduated on or after September 1, 2016, to have a GPA that is at least 2.75 if he or she is sponsored by a provisional training program prior to applying for a CE and the candidate is employed when he or she participates in the CE educator preparation program. Candidates using this provision to be eligible for a CE can make up no more than 10 percent of a CE educator preparation program's annual accepted candidates.

The petition states the 3.0 GPA requirement does not take into consideration the following:

- Personal factors that may have caused an individual's GPA to bellow below 3.0, including a death in the family, prior substance abuse, financial disadvantages, and learning disabilities;
- College majors other than education that may require an individual to take more challenging courses; and
- Rigor of the coursework at a candidate's high school. Candidates who come from low-income or poorly achieving school districts are not nearly as prepared for higher education as their peers from higher-income and better achieving school districts.

The petition states that African-American and Hispanic individuals statistically have GPAs that are lower than a 3.0, thus making them ineligible for a CE or to enroll in an educator preparation program. The petition also states this limits the diversity among school staff even though greater teacher diversity would benefit students. The petition further states the 3.0 GPA requirement eliminates a high number of potential teachers who could meet the needs of English

as a Second Language students and English language learners, especially with an influx of Spanish-speaking students enrolling in the State's school districts.

The petition also states that an individual who graduates from an accredited college or university should be afforded the opportunity to enroll in an educator preparation program because obtaining an undergraduate degree proves the individual can handle the workload of an educator preparation program.

The petition also included links to news articles and publications about the effects of increasing requirements for teacher candidates on the diversity of the education profession, the focus on GPAs verses skills, and policy changes that can yield better teachers.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 1:30-4.2, the Department shall subsequently mail to the petitioner, and file with the Office of Administrative Law, a notice of action on the petition.