

## **Public Notice**

### **Education**

#### **State Board of Education**

#### **Notice of Action on Petition for Rulemaking**

#### **Regulations Regarding Requirements for Certificates**

Petitioner: Spiros Zambas.

**Take notice** that on September 16, 2024, the State Board of Education (State Board) received a petition for rulemaking from the above petitioner, requesting the State Board amend and repeal regulations regarding requirements for certificates.

The petitioner sought to amend and repeal regulations regarding requirements for certificates, but did not specify which regulations at Title 6A of the New Jersey Administrative Code. The petitioner's request questioned why a person who did not go to college but is able to pass State standardized tests that demonstrate the person's level of education is equivalent to people with a college degree in specific subject matters would be prevented from earning an alternate path teaching certificate. The petitioner's request also questioned why a person who took extra courses that were irrelevant to the field of study or degree but resulted in a lower grade point average (GPA) should be punished and deemed uneducated when the person has earned a degree and passed all of the Praxis tests.

A notice acknowledging receipt of the petition was published in the October 21, 2024, New Jersey Register at 56 N.J.R. 2104(b).

N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3 establishes the requirements for obtaining a certificate of eligibility (CE), which often is referred to as the "alternate route" as it allows a candidate to seek and accept employment in corresponding positions requiring a certificate and then work in a

classroom while attending an educator preparation program. The criteria at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3 for a CE in an instructional area include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Hold a bachelor's or an advanced degree from an accredited college or university;
2. Achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 when a GPA of 4.00 equals an A grade for candidates graduating on or after September 1, 2016, in a bachelor's degree program, higher degree program, or a State-approved post-baccalaureate certification program.
3. Complete the required subject-area course requirements; and
4. Pass the appropriate State test(s) of subject matter knowledge.

The above requirements address different aspects of qualifying for a CE. The degree and minimum GPA requirements establish that a candidate has the general and content-specific knowledge and skills needed to be employed in the current educator workforce, while the appropriate State test(s) of subject matter knowledge establishes that the candidate has the content expertise needed to teach the subject area at the specified grade level.

The existing CE requirements also include flexibilities for candidates who do not have the required GPA or a passing score on the appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge but exceed the requirement in the other area. N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3(b)2 allows a candidate with a GPA that is below 3.00, but at least 2.75, to meet the GPA requirements by having a score on the appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge that exceeds the required passing score by 10 percent or more. Likewise, a candidate who has a GPA of 3.50 or higher can meet the required passing score on the appropriate State test(s) of subject matter knowledge if the candidate's score is no more than five percent lower than the required passing score.

Regulations adopted in 2023 implemented a five-year pilot program that provides qualified candidates with a limited CE or limited certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2b et seq. The limited CE/limited CEAS pilot program exempts a candidate from one requirement, such as the grade point average, if the candidate meets all other certificate requirements and works in a school district that participates in the pilot program.

Furthermore, N.J.A.C 6A:9B-11.3 allows candidates for an instructional certificate in a career and technical education endorsement to complete either experience-based or degree-based requirements. Therefore, holding a degree is not required to obtain a CE with a career and technical education endorsement.

The above-mentioned requirements and flexibilities ensure that students are being taught by properly certified, well-trained, effective educators who meet the needs of their communities, while increasing diversity and the supply of educators and maintaining New Jersey's high standards for educators.

The petitioner's request failed to include all components set forth at N.J.A.C. 1:30-4.1(b) and 6A:6-4.1(b), which require a petition for rulemaking to state the substance or nature of the rulemaking that is requested, the reasons for the request and the petitioner's interest in the request, and references to the authority of the agency to take the requested action. The request did not reference the agency's authority to take the requested action.

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, after due consideration pursuant to law, the petitioner's request is hereby denied.