

## **Education**

### **State Board of Education**

#### **New Jersey Educator Preparation Programs**

#### **State Board of Examiners and Certification**

#### **Adopted New Rules: N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6 and 6A:9B-11A**

Proposed: January 7, 2019, at 51 N.J.R. 9(a).

Adopted: April 17, 2019, by the New Jersey State Board of Education, Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner, Department of Education, and Secretary, State Board of Education.

Filed: April 23, 2019, as R.2019 d.045, **with non-substantial changes** not requiring additional public notice and comment (see N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.5).

Authority: P.L. 2015, c. 111 (N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2.18 through 2.22).

Effective Date: May 20, 2019.

Expiration Date: November 12, 2022.

#### **Summary of Public Comments and Agency Responses:**

The following is a summary of the comments received from members of the public and the Department of Education's (Department) responses. Each commenter is identified at the end of the comment by a number that corresponds to the following list:

1. Christina Cucci, President, New Jersey Association of School Librarians
2. Christine Halstater, New Jersey Association of School Librarians
3. Maureen Carroll, School Librarian
4. Jean Public
5. Marie Blistan, President, New Jersey Education Association
6. Michael A. Vrancik, Director, Government Relations, New Jersey School Boards Association

1. COMMENT: The commenter expressed support for the proposed new rules, noting that teacher certification must be based on effective teaching practices and ongoing professional development that foster continuous quality of instruction throughout a teacher's career. (6)

RESPONSE: The Department thanks the commenter for the support.

2. COMMENT: The commenter thanked the Department for following the vast majority of the Teacher Leader Endorsement Advisory Board's recommendations and proposing regulations to create a teacher leader endorsement. The commenter stated that the proposed rulemaking is an important step toward creating a culture of collaboration and shared leadership in schools and a culture where teachers can participate in decisions about schools and learning. (5)

RESPONSE: The Department thanks the commenter for the support.

3. COMMENT: The commenters inquired whether school librarians who hold the school library media specialist endorsement to the educational services certificate and have instructional certificates as previous classroom teachers would be eligible for a teacher leader endorsement. The commenters requested amendments to the proposed rules so a school district does not disqualify educational services personnel who also have instructional certificates from becoming teacher leaders in the school district. (1 and 2)

RESPONSE: The adopted new rules implement N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2.18, which requires the State Board of Education (State Board) to authorize a teacher leader endorsement to the instructional certificate. Therefore, holders of an instructional certificate who meet the other adopted requirements will be eligible for the teacher leader endorsement under the authorizing statute and the adopted rules even if the individuals currently are not teaching in a traditional classroom setting. Therefore, amendments to the proposed rules are not necessary because educational services personnel who also have instructional certificates will be eligible to pursue a teacher leader endorsement, as long as they fulfill the other requirements set forth in the adopted new

rules.

4. COMMENT: The commenter suggested that the Department include an exception to the requirements for the teacher leader endorsement to include school library media specialists who hold an educational services certification. The commenter stated only individuals holding an instructional certificate would be eligible for the teacher leader endorsement under the current proposed rules. The commenter stated that many school librarians are already teacher leaders. The commenter also stated that school librarians are paid using the same scale and contract as teachers, instruct students daily, and are eligible for the New Jersey Governor's Educator of the Year program and many other teacher benefits.

The commenter further suggested the proposed rules be amended to allow for a portfolio element for individuals who hold an educational services certificate to prove the capacity for being a teacher leader through their career accomplishments if adding the exception is not possible. The commenter also suggested that the Department change the endorsement title to "education leader" or "instructional leader" to include more roles. (3)

RESPONSE: The proposed new rules implement N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2.18, which requires the State Board to authorize a "teacher leader endorsement" to the instructional certificate and not to the educational services certificate or other certificates. Therefore, only holders of an instructional certificate who meet the other proposed requirements will be eligible for the teacher leader endorsement under the authorizing statute and the proposed rules even if the individuals currently are not teaching in a traditional classroom setting.

5. COMMENT: The commenter expressed opposition to the teacher leader endorsement. The commenter stated that the present system is fine and there is no need for government-appointed teacher leaders or the additional education that is vaunted. (4)

RESPONSE: The teacher leader endorsement is required under N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2.18, which mandates the State Board to authorize a teacher leader endorsement to the instructional certificate. The teacher leader endorsement is not a government-appointment; rather, this endorsement will be issued to candidates just as other endorsements are similarly issued to individuals upon meeting the eligibility criteria for those endorsements. While the new rules will allow teachers to pursue formal leadership opportunities and roles within the school community, school districts will determine how teacher leadership is developed and supported at the local school district level.

6. COMMENT: The commenter expressed concern about the Department's inclusion of a Commissioner-approved performance assessment as part of the teacher leader endorsement eligibility requirements at proposed N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-11A.2(a)5 because teacher leadership is not a one-size-fits-all model. The commenter explained that teacher leadership can concentrate on different areas depending on the needs of an individual school district or the focus area of an individual teacher leader candidate. The commenter also asked that the Department consider that particular performance assessments might work better than other assessments for different teacher leader preparation programs or even concentration areas within a program. (5)

RESPONSE: The Department thanks the commenter for the input. The new rules will allow approved providers to tailor their teacher leader preparation programs, which will allow interested candidates to focus on the school district's diverse needs and the candidates' interests. Additionally, approved teacher leader preparation programs will have flexibility to develop internal performance assessments that measure a candidate's knowledge of, and ability to demonstrate, the Teacher Leader Model Standards. In providing flexibility, the Department must also ensure that educators seeking the teacher leader endorsement demonstrate the skills and qualities of a teacher leader as embodied in the Teacher Leader Model Standards. Therefore,

candidates will be required to pass a Commissioner-approved assessment aligned to the Teacher Leader Model Standards to obtain the endorsement.

The Department has invited input from stakeholders on the design of the assessment through a request for information (RFI) process. Responses from the RFI will inform the request for qualifications (RFQ), which will set forth the required elements of performance assessments submitted for approval. The process allows for multiple performance assessments to be submitted and approved. A Commissioner-approved performance assessment will ensure that all candidates are held to the same expectation through outcome measures, while still allowing teacher leader preparation programs to be different and innovative.

7. COMMENT: The commenter expressed concern that proposed new N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6.5(a)1, which requires individuals selected to serve as mentors for a teacher leader endorsement candidate to demonstrate instructional leadership skills and be employed in a role that requires and utilizes the skills, undercuts the entire philosophy behind the endorsement. The commenter stated that proposed new N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6.5(a)1 could be interpreted to mean that only individuals who are working under administrative certificates are qualified to mentor teacher leaders until there is a corps of educators who hold the teacher leader endorsement. The commenter also stated that while the Department has assured that proposed new N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6.5(a)1 does not preclude teachers from serving as mentors, the Department and the State Board should clarify the proposed language to ensure that teachers with demonstrated records of leading from the classroom can mentor an endorsement candidate even if not employed in a supervisory capacity. The commenter requested that the Department also provide to the field, guidance about the eligibility of teachers to serve as mentors to teacher leader endorsement candidates. (5)

RESPONSE: The Department thanks the commenter for the input and has changed N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6.5(a)1 and (a)1i upon adoption, as reflected in the Summary of Agency-Initiated

Changes. Additionally, the Department clarifies that mentors are not limited to individuals that are serving in a supervisory capacity.

8. COMMENT: The commenter inquired whether the proposed new rules will require instructional certificate holders to possess the teacher leader endorsement to perform teacher leader activities or if school districts will be able to employ an individual without the teacher leader endorsement to perform duties under the Teacher Leader Model Standards. (6)

RESPONSE: Presently, many teachers already serve as leaders in school districts and take on leadership roles without a formal title or recognition. The teacher leader endorsement will recognize that a teacher has formally gained knowledge, skills, and competencies to lead his or her colleagues and the profession. The teacher leader endorsement will give teachers the opportunity to advance their status and influence while remaining in the classroom, where research shows they have the greatest impact on student outcomes. The authorizing statute and the new rules will not bar teachers from informally performing teacher leader activities.

Similarly, school districts will not be prevented from employing individuals who do not hold the teacher leader endorsement to perform duties aligned to the Teacher Leader Model Standards.

9. COMMENT: The commenter inquired whether individuals who currently perform teacher leader duties in a school district will have to cease those activities after the effective date of the proposed regulations. (6)

RESPONSE: The Department does not expect educators who currently serve in teacher leader roles or perform teacher leader duties to stop because the authorizing statute and the proposed new rules do not mandate that informal teacher leader roles be formalized. Instead, teachers will have the opportunity to obtain an additional endorsement that designates them as leaders in the school community.

10. COMMENT: The commenter inquired whether school districts will be required to have on staff a teacher leader or will be able to determine staffing according to local needs. (6)

RESPONSE: While the Department anticipates that the new rules will allow teachers to pursue formal leadership opportunities and roles within the school community and will result in school districts encouraging teacher leadership, the authorizing statute and the new rules will not require school districts to utilize teacher leaders. However, school districts will not be able to prevent individuals who meet all requirements from obtaining the teacher leader endorsement.

**Summary of Agency-Initiated Changes:**

1. The Department will change upon adoption N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6.5(a)1, which will require teacher leader preparation programs to assign an individual to support the candidate during the clinical experience, to replace “has demonstrated instructional leadership skills as defined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards, and is employed in a role that requires and utilizes the skills” with “is employed, and has utilized instructional leadership skills as defined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards.” The changes will clarify that the individual assigned to serve as a mentor is sufficiently qualified, as long as he or she has utilized instructional leadership skills as defined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards. Without clarifying the rule upon adoption, school districts may be negatively impacted as they might be prevented from selecting as mentors, individuals who may not be currently utilizing teacher leadership skills, but have utilized those skills in the past.

2. The Department makes the same changes upon adoption at N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-6.5(a)1i, which will require teacher leader preparation programs to provide to the Department during the periodic review, evidence regarding the qualifications of individuals providing support to candidates during the clinical experience.

There are no Federal requirements that impact the adopted new rules.

**Full text** of the adopted new rules follows (additions to proposal indicated in boldface with asterisks **\*thus\***; deletions from proposal indicated in brackets with asterisks **\*[thus]\***):

## SUBCHAPTER 6. TEACHER LEADER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

### 6A:9A-6.5 Teacher leader preparation program clinical requirements

(a) The teacher leader preparation program shall include clinical experiences embedded throughout the program's duration that shall be:

1. Facilitated by the program, including the assignment of an individual who possesses a teacher leader endorsement, or who holds an administrative certification or a certificate of eligibility for administrative certification, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-12, **\*who is employed, and\*** has **\*[demonstrated]\* \*utilized\*** instructional leadership skills as defined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards, **\*[and is employed in a role that requires and utilizes the skills,]\*** to provide support to the candidate during the clinical experience.
  - i. The program shall provide to the Department during the periodic review evidence that individuals providing support to candidates during the clinical experience **\*are employed and\*** have **\*[demonstrated]\* \*utilized\*** instructional leadership skills as defined by the Teacher Leader Model Standards<sup>\*</sup>[, and are employed in a role that require and utilize the skills]<sup>\*</sup>; and
2. (No change from proposal.)

(b) (No change from proposal.)