

**Notice of Proposal Regarding Proposed Amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:9, Professional Standards, N.J.A.C. 6A:9A, New Jersey Educator Preparation Programs and N.J.A.C. 6A:9B, State Board of Examiners and Certification**

The following is the accessible version of the notice of adoption for amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:9, 9A, and 9B. The notice of adoption document includes two sections – [comments and responses](#) and [rule text for changes made upon adoption](#).

## **Education**

### **State Board of Education**

#### **Professional Standards**

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

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

**Adopted Amendments: N.J.A.C. 6A:9-2.1; 6A:9A-4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.4, and 5.5; and 6A:9B-6.1, 7.3, 8.2, 8.3, 8.7, 8.8, 8A.3, 9.2, 11.3, 11.5, 11.6, 11.12, and 11A.3**

Proposed: July 21, 2025, at 57 N.J.R. 1537(a).

Adopted: December 5, 2025, by the New Jersey State Board of Education, Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner, Department of Education, and Secretary, State Board of Education.

Filed: December 10, 2025, as R.2026 d.016, **with non-substantial changes** not requiring additional public notice or comment (see N.J.A.C. 1:30-6.3).

Authority: N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2.23, 2.24, 2.26, 2.31, 2.32, 35, and 36; and P.L. 2024, c. 26.

Effective Date: January 5, 2026.

Expiration Date: April 6, 2030.

#### **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. Jessica McPolin
2. Evelyn Kearney, Computer teacher, Aldrich School, Howell Township Public Schools
3. Kaity Gray, Director of Personnel, Howell Township Public Schools
4. Cindy Assini, Ed.D., Supervisor of Social Studies, West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District

5. Derek Sica, Supervisor of English as a Second Language, Performing Arts: Music, Social Studies, and World Languages, Jefferson Township Public Schools
  6. Cristina Cutrone, Supervisor of Social Studies and Business, Tenaly Public Schools
  7. Laura Bujnowski, Social studies teacher, West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District
  8. Ermanno J. Morelli, Acting Assistant Principal of Glen Rock High School, Supervisor of Social Studies and Business, Acting District Test Coordinator, Glen Rock Public Schools
  9. Regina Santangelo, Social studies teacher, West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District
  10. Keith Dennison, Supervisor of English and Social Studies, Warren Hill Regional School District
  11. Jennie Lamon, Assistant Director of Government Relations, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
  12. Will Roddy, Director of Government Affairs, New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association
  13. John Burns, Esq., Senior Legislative and Policy Counsel, New Jersey School Boards Association
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1. Comment: The commenters expressed support for the proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:9, 9A, and 9B because they will align the rules to new State laws and recognize new alternative pathways for educators. (11, 12, and 13)  
Response: The Department appreciates the support.

2. Comment: The commenter stated that the proposed amendments collectively represent a significant advancement in the standards and practices governing educator preparation and certification in New Jersey. The commenter also stated that proposed amendments represent a balanced approach to maintaining high standards while promoting inclusivity, flexibility, and responsiveness to the evolving educational landscape. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

3. Comment: The commenter stated that the proposed amendments help address the State's ongoing, crisis-level school staffing shortages and educator pipeline challenges. (12)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

4. Comment: The commenter stated that continuous efforts to improve and increase the supply of qualified candidates for school employment are beneficial, as long as the efforts do not compromise the quality of the applicant pool and do not result in State-mandated intrusions into the authority of district boards of education including, but not limited to, their right to determine their budgets and deliver an instructional program that best meets the needs of their students and local communities. (13)

Response: The Department thanks the commenter for the input.

5. Comment: The commenter stated that the proposed amendments will effectuate the Legislature's intent to ease the current shortage of teachers. The commenter also expressed support for the proposed amendments because they will aid efforts to increase the supply of qualified candidates available for school employment by: eliminating the Department-established minimum score on a Commissioner-approved test of basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills; creating a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS) paraprofessional educator preparation pathway; eliminating the

requirement to use a Commissioner-approved performance-based assessment and allowing educator preparation programs to establish their own; adding coursework in educator preparation programs for teacher of students with disabilities endorsements so candidates learn about autism; requiring coursework regarding culturally responsive teaching and special education topics for all educator preparation programs that lead to instructional certificates; and allowing educator preparation programs to accept any number of credit hours from accredited county colleges. (13)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

6. Comment: The commenter expressed support for the proposed amendments throughout N.J.A.C. 6A:9A and 9B that remove the Commissioner-approved performance-based assessment requirements. The commenter stated that the proposed amendments will empower educator preparation programs to develop their own assessments, which, the commenter indicated, will lead to a more tailored and context-specific evaluation of teacher candidates and ultimately contribute to the preparation of more competent and confident educators. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

7. Comment: The commenter expressed support for proposed new N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-4.2(a)4 and 5, which will require educator preparation programs for an instructional certificate to include training in special education, culturally responsive teaching, and autism spectrum disorder. The commenter also supported proposed new N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-4.2(a)6, which will require educator preparation programs that lead to an instructional certificate with the teacher of students with disabilities endorsement to include coursework and instructional practices related to the autism spectrum disorder. The commenter stated that

the proposed amendments demonstrate the Department's commitment to preparing educators to meet the diverse needs of all students. The commenter also stated that the proposed amendments will ensure that future teachers are not only aware of inclusive and effective teaching strategies but also are adept at implementing them. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

8. Comment: The commenter expressed support for proposed new N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-4.4(c)1 and 4.4(d)1 because they will create a streamlined process for paraprofessionals to obtain a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS) in specific endorsement areas. The commenter stated that the initiative recognizes the valuable experience that paraprofessionals bring to the educational environment and will help address teacher shortages and promote career advancement. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

9. Comment: The commenter expressed support for the proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-5.4(a)1i, which will permit educator preparation programs to accept any number of credit hours from accredited county colleges. The commenter stated that the proposed amendments will promote accessibility and affordability in teacher education, facilitate a more seamless transition for students from two-year institutions to four-year programs, and broaden the pipeline of qualified educators. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

10. Comment: The commenter stated that the proposed amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.3(a)5, 8A.3(b)3, 11.3(a)1i and (a)3i(1), 11.5(a)2i(2), 11.6(a)2ii, and 11.12(b)2 that eliminate the basic skills assessment requirement, denote a commendable step toward removing unnecessary barriers for educators. The commenter also stated that the

proposed amendments acknowledge that basic skills assessments are duplicative of other comprehensive requirements for an instructional certificate and can be an unnecessary barrier for some candidates without diminishing New Jersey’s high-quality instructional certificate requirements. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

11. Comment: The commenter expressed support for the amendments to the computer science endorsement at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-9.2(a)7. The commenter stated that the amendments are timely, align with the increased emphasis on STEM education, and will ensure that educators teaching computer science in grades nine through 12 possess the specialized knowledge and skills necessary to deliver high-quality instruction in this critical field. (11)

Response: The Department appreciates the support.

12. Comment: The commenters expressed concern regarding the amendment at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-9.2(a)7 related to the computer science endorsement to the instructional certificate. The commenters stated that the amendment would extend the computer science endorsement to preschool through grade 12 and, instead, should be limited to grades nine through 12 because they are the grades where the rigor of computer science warrants specialized training. The commenters also stated that the State’s preschool standards and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for kindergarten through grade eight do not align with the depth and rigor of a formal computer science curriculum and that concepts at the earlier grade levels are more effectively taught through integration with broader subjects such as mathematics, science, and digital literacy. The commenters stated that extending the endorsement risks misapplication of certification requirements,

over-specialization in early grades where it is not needed, staffing confusion, and conflicts with early childhood education principles. (1, 2, and 3)

Response: The amendments at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-9.2(a)7 replace “preschool through grade 12” with “grades nine through 12” and, therefore, remove the requirement for teachers of computer science in preschool through grade eight to hold a computer science endorsement. The amendments align the rule with State law and improve flexibility at the preschool and elementary and middle school levels.

13. Comment: The commenters requested that the Department expand the authorization of the social studies endorsement to the instructional certificate to allow holders to teach psychology if they have completed at least 12 postsecondary psychology credits. The commenters stated that psychology is experiencing a growth in student interest and that the Statewide shortage of psychology teachers limits student access to a subject that explores academic and social-emotional growth, forces disruptive staffing changes, and constrains school districts. The commenters also stated that allowing experienced social studies teachers who have taken relevant coursework to be eligible for a psychology endorsement would increase access, promote equity, and ease staffing challenges without added financial burden on school districts. (4 through 10)

Response: The Department has not proposed to amend the psychology or social studies endorsement requirements at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-9.3(a)6 and/or 10.8, respectfully.

Therefore, the comments are outside the scope of this rulemaking.

14. Comment: The commenter expressed concern that the proposed amendments do not go far enough to address the urgent challenge of improving the educator pipeline. The commenter stated that schools and school leaders rely on substitute teachers, virtual



classes, or other emergent measures to address educator shortages in critical areas such as STEM, special education, and English language acquisition. The commenter stated that the State has an opportunity to modernize its educator certification system to make it more accessible, responsive, and efficient while maintaining high standards. The commenter urged the State Board to further strengthen the pipeline by:

- Expanding competency pathways, including by allowing accomplished professionals and paraprofessionals to earn a certificate through accelerated residencies and performance-based assessments;
- Encouraging “grow-your-own” programs that connect local talent to flexible routes to earn a certificate;
- Streamlining certification by simplifying reciprocity for experienced out-of-State educators and creating broader credentialing options to meet hiring needs;
- Advocating with the State Legislature for the elimination of residency requirements, which, the commenter contended, continue to be a barrier to recruitment;
- Making provisional certificate renewals more flexible to enable strong candidates to stay in classrooms while completing the requirements; and
- Continuing to meet with school leaders to obtain direct information about hiring and certification needs. (11)

Response The Department appreciates the commenter’s suggestions; however, they are outside the scope of this rulemaking.

15. Comment: The commenter stated that additional changes are necessary to address the staffing shortage crisis in urban school communities, especially in high-need areas such as special education and world languages. The commenter suggested the following

changes, many of which the commenter indicated were among the initial recommendations issued in 2023 by Governor Murphy’s Task Force on Public School Staff Shortages in New Jersey:

- Provide more flexibility regarding the minimum grade point average (GPA) requirement to earn an instructional certificate because an undergraduate GPA does not correlate with a candidate’s efficacy as an educator. The commenter also stated that an individual who performs poorly for a semester or year of college cannot earn an instructional certificate;
- Return to a one-year educator preparation program for educators entering teaching through a certificate of eligibility (CE), which also is known as the alternative route, because the two or more years that it currently takes to earn a standard certificate reduces the number of people willing to pursue that pathway;
- Reevaluate the requirements for clinical experience, such as student teaching to address difficulties related to completion, including financial burdens on candidates. The commenter stated that clinical experience can be completed within one semester; and
- Extend or make permanent the limited CE/limited CEAS pilot program beyond the current expiration of September 2027 because the highly successful program has helped schools recruit and retain more diverse educators and provides school leaders with an additional tool to address teacher shortages. (12)

Response: The Department appreciates the commenter’s suggestions; however, they are outside the scope of this rulemaking.

#### **Summary of Agency-Initiated Changes:**

1. The Department is changing N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-11A.3(a)5 to correct the statutory citation to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-35.a.

### **Federal Standards Statement**

The amendments are not inconsistent with, and do not exceed, Federal requirements or standards, as there are no Federal requirements or standards related to the Commissioner-approved performance-based assessment of basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills; certification of candidates who have experience as paraprofessionals or instructional assistants; coursework content for educator preparation programs; and the transfer of credit hours between institutions.

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

#### Subchapter 8. Requirements for Instructional Certification

##### 6A:9B-8.8 Requirements for interstate reciprocity for a CEAS, CE, or standard certificate

(a)-(c) (No change from proposal.)

(d) A candidate who has a valid standard certificate issued by another state, including an endorsement in a subject area or grade level also offered by the Department, but does not meet the requirements at \*[1]\* (c)1 above shall be issued a CEAS. The candidate shall meet all requirements for provisional and standard certificates at N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.4 and 8.7.

#### Subchapter 11A. Requirements for Teacher Leader Endorsement

##### 6A:9B-11A.3 Requirements

(a) To be eligible for the teacher leader endorsement, the candidate shall meet the following requirements:

1.-4. (No change)

5. Pass a performance-based assessment approved by the educator preparation program, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-\*[35.a.a]\*\***35.a**\*.

(b) (No change)