



Christie Administration Announces Enhancements to Teacher Preparation and Certification

For Immediate Release

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Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey State Board of Education today adopted significant enhancements to requirements for teacher preparation and certification based upon input from current and prospective New Jersey educators, stakeholder recommendations, and national research. These updates are focused on ensuring all teacher candidates - no matter what pathway they take into the classroom - receive rigorous and relevant preparation experiences and demonstrate effective teaching prior to certification.

Key changes include:

- Increase the duration of student teaching experiences for teacher candidates to extend over at least one full school year. Previously, one semester was required.
- Ensure teacher candidates are exposed to multiple types of classrooms, including at least one setting with students with disabilities, prior to student teaching.
- Require “alternate route” candidates to receive sequential training from a single teacher-preparation program. Previously, candidates could receive piecemeal training from multiple teacher-preparation providers.
- Require all teachers to complete a performance assessment in order to earn their certification. In addition to existing licensure assessments, which measure how well teachers know the content they'll be teaching, performance assessments require candidates to demonstrate their ability to plan and teach a lesson.
- All teachers will now earn their standard teacher certification after demonstrating competency through the statewide AchieveNJ educator-evaluation system rather than a separate system.

This initiative is intended to complement the state’s improved evaluation and professional growth systems for practicing teachers.

“In light of our recent PARCC and NAEP results, we have a clear call to action to do better in preparing our students,” said David Hespe, Commissioner of Education. “One way we can do this is to provide better support for our teachers, given how critical they are in helping all students succeed. Today, the State Board has helped us take another big step in that direction.”

Hespe added, “In particular, we know that hands-on experiences are invaluable in preparing teachers, and not all candidates have been getting enough of that time in the classroom. Providing more of these experiences will lead to better prepared teachers, which in turn leads to increased student achievement.”

The regulations adopted today reflect many months of collaboration between a diverse group of stakeholders and state policy makers.

Peter Shulman, Assistant Commissioner and Chief Talent Officer, described the Department’s effort to balance a sense of urgency with the need to provide the proper time for implementation.

“We simply can’t overstate the critical role our partners across the state have played in getting us to this point,” Shulman explained, “and we will continue to collaborate with them as they develop our next generation of teachers and help us work toward our ultimate goal – providing effective educators for every New Jersey student.”

While many of the enhancements adopted today will take effect immediately, others will be phased in over the next few years. The Department has already begun efforts such as the [Educator Preparation Provider Annual Reports](#) and improved preparation program approval and review processes to provide programs, teacher candidates, and districts with transparent data and expectations about teacher preparation. As a next step, a teacher performance assessment will be required for candidates to demonstrate their ability to plan and teach a lesson prior to certification. By 2018, all preparation programs will ensure teacher candidates have extensive student teaching experience over at least one full school year.

Shulman added, “We know that no single effort will work in isolation, but rather we need an aligned focus on all

of the elements of the teaching profession – preparation, certification, evaluation and professional growth, as well as retention and leadership opportunities. These enhancements for novice teachers complement concurrent efforts to promote excellent instruction across the state.”

For more information, visit the Department’s [Educator Preparation website](#).