

Connecticut State Board of Education

Hartford

**To Be Proposed:
December 1, 2021**

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, Governor Lamont declared public health and civil preparedness emergencies throughout the State of Connecticut in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the United States and Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, on several occasions since March 10, 2020, acting pursuant to legal authority conferred by the Connecticut General Statutes, and in response to the continued need to respond adequately to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Lamont renewed the declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies and also issued new declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies; and

WHEREAS, with proper protective measures in place, in-person learning provides the best environment for educating our students, and attending school in person provides children with meaningful access to necessary supports for mental health and wellness as well as access to nutrition, shelter and socialization; and

WHEREAS, the increased prevalence of COVID-19 infections throughout the state have given rise to unprecedented staffing challenges for schools such that, as of November 17, 2021, which is well after the start of the 2021-22 school year, there remained more than 1,000 vacancies for certified staff members in Connecticut public schools statewide and the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification continues to trend well above pre-pandemic level requests for temporary authorizations and permits; now therefore be it:

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education adopts the recommendation from the Connecticut State Department of Education to extend, for the 2021-22 school year only, implementation of the following temporary certification endorsements, as allowable under Sec. 10-145d-619 of *Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations* Emergency Generalist, PK-8 (#201), Emergency Generalist, 7-12 (#202), Emergency Teacher of English Language Learners, PK-12 (#204), and Emergency PK authorization for Comprehensive Special Education, K-12 (#205) to allow an educator who currently holds an initial, provisional or professional teaching certificate to be eligible for Emergency Authorization at the request of the LEA/District, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this first day of December, Two Thousand Twenty-One.

Signed: _____
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

DATE: December 1, 2021

SUBJECT: Re-Authorization of Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report provides the State Board of Education (SBE) with a rationale for the recommendation to re-adopt Emergency Educator Certification Endorsements as temporary authorizations for the 2021-22 academic year only in an effort to provide additional flexibility for districts and local education authorities (LEAs) to meet the unique staffing challenges presented by the ongoing health pandemic.

History/Background

The employment of appropriately certified, authorized and/or permitted educators remains crucial to the success of all students. Throughout the ongoing pandemic, the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification has worked closely with PK-12 Superintendents, HR personnel and Educator Preparation Program (EPP) personnel, to implement numerous flexibility measures to allow for the continued processing of applications, expanded pathways into the profession and on-going flexibilities for teacher candidates and educators to meet the needs of students.

The Bureau continues to provide guidance to districts and LEAs regarding flexibility around the use of non-certified staff members and candidates enrolled in EPPs under temporary authorizations, guidance regarding the re-employment of retired educators, and strategies to utilize the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) EdSight Active Certificate Search Tool which has provided easier access to Connecticut Educator Certification data to assist districts in strategic recruitment and hiring of staff. Additionally, in August 2020, the Connecticut State Board of Education approved Emergency Educator Endorsements for the 2020-21 school year and supported the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification, under the authority of the Commissioner of Education to utilize Equivalency, as prescribed in Sec. 10-145d-614, to accept 20 months of successful service as a paraeducator to serve in-lieu of the 12-credits of special education content required for temporary authorizations (Durational Shortage Area Permits & Long Term Substitute Authorizations).

Recommendation and Justification

Due to COVID-related circumstances and on-going concerns regarding the transmission of the Delta variant, the 2021-2022 academic year is proving to be increasingly challenging for Connecticut school districts to hire appropriately certified, authorized and permitted educators.

As such it is recommended that the following Emergency Endorsements to be re-approved as “Temporary Unique Endorsements” by the SBE for the 2021-22 school year only as allowed under Sec. 10-145d-619 of *Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations*.

(1) Emergency Generalist, PK-8 (#201) Emergency Generalist, 7-12 (#202)

As new endorsements, the Emergency Generalist, PK-8 (#201) and Emergency Generalist, 7-12 (#202) would allow a certified educator who currently holds an initial, provisional or professional teaching certificate to teach all content/subject and grade levels within the PK-8 or 7-12 grade span, exclusive of special education and TESOL/bilingual endorsements, for the 2021-2022 school year at the request of the LEA/District.

Currently certified elementary #002, #003, #004, #005, #013, #305, #112, #113 holders would be eligible for the Emergency # 201 and current 7-12 holders for the #202. Currently certified PK-12 educators and middle grades (4-8) would be eligible for either the #201/#202, or both, depending on need.

(2) Emergency Teacher of English Language Learners, PK-12 (#204)

The Emergency Teacher of English Language Learners, PK-12 (#204) would authorize a certified world language teacher or a bilingual or TESOL teacher who currently holds an initial, provisional or professional teaching certificate to serve either as a TESOL or bilingual education content teacher in grades PK-12 for the 2021-22 school year at the request of the LEA/District.

(3) Emergency PK authorization for Comprehensive Special Education, K-12 (#205)

The Emergency PK authorization for Comprehensive Special Education, K-12 (#205) would authorize a certified Special Education teacher, who currently holds an initial, provisional or professional teaching certificate authorized for #165, K-12 Comprehensive Special Education, to serve as a special education teacher in the PK setting for the 2021-22 school year at the request of the LEA/District.

In each instance, the temporary authorization would be issued as a stand-alone authorization, valid for the remainder of the school year, with no fees associated with the processing. Status as a temporary authorization would allow the SBE and Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification greater control over the addition and subsequent removal (expiration) of the “Temporary Authorization.” All Emergency Endorsements issued under a Temporary Authorization would be set to expire June 30, 2022.

Districts would submit a request to the Bureau to have the “Temporary Authorization” assigned to the designated educator’s EIN# with the educator completing part 1 of the application and the district completing part 2. This process would help ensure that the use of the Emergency Endorsement was mutually agreed to by both the educator and the requesting district. This process protects the role of the educator in the decision and through procedure, encourages districts to have conversations with educators prior to requesting the emergency authorization.

The Bureau would re-establish the unique emergency endorsement codes into the Educator Database System (EDS) which would allow districts to assign the Emergency Endorsements to an educator for the 2021-22 school year to ensure compliance with both certification and Teachers Retirement Board (TRB) requirements.

Follow-up Activity

If the SBE approves the recommendation to adopt temporary educator certification endorsements as authorizations for 2021-2022 school year, the CSDE will notify Connecticut districts, LEAs and partner organizations immediately. The Bureau would continue to process applications through the use of the ED 2020 form which was developed to process LEA/district requests of unique emergency endorsements during the 2020-21 school year.

Prepared by: Christopher M. Todd, Bureau Chief, Talent Office

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