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**The Rhode Island Certification Regulations:
 Special Education Certification**

The Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education approved on November 3, 2011 new certification regulations entitled “Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island.” The new regulations impact how Rhode Island educators attain certification, the assignments for which they are eligible, and how they will renew their certificates. Some of the elements of the new regulations went into effect on January 1, 2012 the remainder of the regulations will go into effect on January 1, 2015. The chart below details the implementation dates for these key elements.

Overview of Certification Regulations: Key Changes and Effective Dates that Impact all Rhode Island Educators

Key Changes effective January 1, 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIDE now issues three types of certificates: a 3 year Initial, 5 year Professional, or 7 year Advanced Certificate. Renewal of an educator’s certificate will be based on evaluation ratings that demonstrate effective practice • To better meet the needs of Rhode Island educators and streamline the certification process, all endorsements (Bilingual and Dual Language, ESL, and Middle School) have been renamed certificates for consistent terminology • Several certification areas have been revised and updated to provide additional flexibility in the assignment of educators (e.g. School Counselor, School Principal, and Social Studies)
Key Changes effective January 1, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIDE will offer additional pathways to attain certification by issuing three new types of Preliminary Certificates (Expert Residency, Temporary Initial Educator, and Visiting Lecturer) • Several new Full Certificates will be added to meet district, curriculum, and educator’s needs (e.g. PK-12 World Language, Instructional Leader, Mathematics Specialist/Consultant) • Credential Review will replace the Transcript Analysis process and Credential Review will only be available in certificate areas that do not have Rhode Island approved preparation programs

Additional Certification Regulation Changes that Impact all Rhode Island Educators

- Educators progress between certification tiers, Initial, Professional, and Advanced, based on their performance as determined by evaluation ratings from state approved local evaluation systems
- Educators seeking a new certification area must meet all issuance requirements for the new certificate area, including attaining a required passing score on all certification tests
- Educators who allow their certificates to expire need to meet any issuance requirements to reinstate their certificates

Certification Regulations: Impact on Special Education Certification

The Certification Regulations also impact Special Education certifications. All currently certified educators who hold any Special Education Certification (Early Childhood Special Education, Elementary/Middle Special Education, Middle/Secondary Special Education, Special Education Blind and Visually Impaired, Special Education Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Special Education Severe/Profound, Special Education Administrator) continue to renew their certificates by meeting all renewal requirements. These educators *do not* need to meet any new issuance requirements. Several Special Education certification names have been revised to reflect changes in the field (e.g. Special Education Severe/Profound renamed Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability). RIDE has created a new District Administrator – Special Education certification that requires an educator to hold a Building Administrator certification. RIDE will continue to issue the current Special Education Administrator certification until 2015 that does not require that the applicant hold a Building Administrator certification.

In 2015, several changes in Special Education certification will occur including aligning General Education and Special Education certification, requiring applicants seeking Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability to hold General Education certification, and requiring all new applicants seeking to serve as Special Education administrators to hold a Building Administrator certification prior to the issuance of a District Administrator – Special Education certification.

Overview of Certification Regulations: Key Changes that Impact Special Education Certification

The chart below provides an overview of the key changes in the new certification regulations that specifically impact Special Education certifications. As with the above chart, some of the changes go into effect on January 1, 2012 and others go into effect on January 1, 2015.

Key Changes effective January 1, 2012 for Special Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several certification names have been revised to reflect changes in the field (e.g. Special Education Severe/Profound renamed Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability)• RIDE has created a new certification, District Administrator – Special Education, that requires that an educator hold a Building Administrator certification to attain the certification• RIDE continues to offer for initial issuance and renewal the current Special Education Administrator certification that <i>does not</i> require that an educator hold a Building Administrator certification to attain the certification• RIDE will work to redesign the Program Approval process to coordinate the Program Approval process and the development of Special Education programs aligned to the Council for Exceptional Children standards• The certification application has been updated and consolidated. Effective January 1, 2012, most applicants will complete the new General Certification Application when applying for or renewing a certification
Key Changes effective January 1, 2015 for Special Education Certification
<p>Alignment of General Education and Special Education Certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An educator who currently holds the Elementary/Middle or Middle/Secondary Special Education certification continues to renew their certification and remains eligible to teach at these grade levels• A new applicant who seeks Special Education certification must hold a General Education certification at a specific grade level to receive a corresponding Special Education certification (e.g. Elementary Education to receive Elementary Special Education, Secondary Education to receive Secondary Special Education)

Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability

- An educator who currently holds the Special Education Severe/Profound certification continues to renew their certification as Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability
- A new applicant who seeks Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability must hold a General Education certification (e.g. Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle or Secondary Grades certification) to receive a Special Education – Severe Intellectual Disability certification

Special Education Administrator

- An educator who currently holds the Special Education Administrator certification continues to renew their certification as Special Education Administrator
- A new applicant who seeks certification as a Special Education administrator after January 1, 2015 must meet the issuance requirements for District Administrator – Special Education which includes holding a Building Administrator certification