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The Rhode Island Certification Regulations and Middle Grades 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.

Key Changes effective January 1, 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tiered certification: 3 year Initial, 5 year Professional, and 7 year Advanced Certificates • Certification renewal based on effectiveness tied to evaluation ratings • The conversion of endorsements to certificates • The revision of several certification areas: e.g. School Counselor, School Principal, and Social Studies
Key Changes effective January 1, 2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Preliminary Certificates: e.g. Expert Residency, Temporary Initial Educator, and Visiting Lecturer • New Full Certificates: e.g. PK-12 World Language, Instructional Leader, Mathematics Specialist/Consultant • Credential Review replaces Transcript Analysis and is only available in certificate areas that <i>do not</i> have Rhode Island approved preparation programs • Alignment of special education and general education certificates

The new regulations also impact the certification and assignment of middle grades educators. The new regulations identify three pathways to Middle Grades Certification – Middle Grades Stand-Alone, Middle Grades Elementary Extension, and Middle Grades Secondary Extension. Each pathway and the eligibility for individuals holding these certifications are detailed below. Another change to Middle Grades Certification is that the new regulations allow an educator to teach in any grade level for which they are certified, regardless of the structure and format of the school. As such, an Elementary Educator can teach grades 1 through 6 in any school setting and a Secondary Educator can teach grades 7 through 12 in their content area in any school setting. Another key change of the new regulations is the expanded eligibility for educators who hold a Middle Grades Certificate. An educator who holds a Middle Grades Elementary Extension can teach in grades 1 through 8 and an educator who holds a Middle Grades Secondary Extension can teach in grades 5 through 12.

It is important to note that RIDE has informed districts that districts *may continue* to implement local policies and practices to hire and assign only Middle School certified educators to middle schools. Note also that RIDE recommends that Elementary Teachers who teach in grades 5 and 6 in middle schools serve as generalists if they have not had preparation to serve as content specialists.

Three Pathways to Middle Grades Certification

Pathway 1: Middle Grades Stand Alone

Preparation	Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an approved program for Middle Grades Certification. The program must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 weeks of student teaching in the middle grades ○ Meeting the pedagogical competencies of the RIPTS and the AMLE ○ Meeting the content competencies of the specific content area • Successfully pass all content and pedagogy assessment requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 5 through 8 in any Rhode Island public school as a content specialist in a specified content area

Pathway 2: Middle Grades – Elementary Extension

Preparation	Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an approved program for the preparation of Elementary Teachers. The program must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 weeks of student teaching in the elementary grades ○ Meeting the pedagogical competencies of the RIPTS ○ Meeting the content competencies of the AECE and specific content area standards • Successfully pass all content and pedagogy assessment requirements for Elementary Education <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an approved program for middle grades certification. The program must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 45 hours of practicum in the middle grades content area ○ Meeting the pedagogical competencies of the AMLE ○ Meeting the content competencies of the specific content area • Successfully pass all content and pedagogy assessment requirements for Middle Grades Certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 1 through 6 in any Rhode Island public school • Grades 5 through 8 in any Rhode Island public school as a content specialist in a specified content area

Pathway 3: Middle Grades – Secondary Extension

Preparation	Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an approved program for the preparation of Secondary Grades teachers in a specific content area. The program must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 12 weeks of student teaching in the secondary grades in the specific content area ○ Meeting the pedagogical competencies of the RIPTS ○ Meeting the content competencies of the specific content area • Successfully pass all content and pedagogy assessment requirements for the Secondary Grades content area <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an approved program for Middle Grades certification. The program must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 45 hours of practicum in the middle grades content area ○ Meeting the pedagogical competencies of the AMLE • Successfully pass all content and pedagogy assessment requirements for Middle Grades certification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 5 through 12 in any Rhode Island public school in a specified content area

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