

Alternative Pathways to Certification

EXCERPTS FROM PL 635 THAT ADDRESS ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION:

PL Chapter 635 Part B Section B-2. 20-A MRSA 13011, sub- 6, as enacted by PL 1989, c.1989, c.889, 8 is repealed and the following is enacted in its place:

Sec. B-6. Alternative certification working group. The State Board of Education shall establish a working group to develop one or more alternative certification pathways that meet the standards set forth in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 13011, subsection 6. Members of the State Board of Education shall participate in the working group, and the State Board of Education shall invite the participation of representatives of the Maine Education Association, the Maine School Superintendents Association, the Maine Principals' Association, the Maine School Boards Association, Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities and Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education, representatives of approved educator preparation programs, parents and the business community and other interested parties. The working group shall submit a report describing one or more alternative certification pathways to the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education. The State Board of Education shall submit the report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs no later than November 1, 2012. The report must include pathway descriptions, the working group's recommendations and any draft legislation or rules needed to implement the recommendations.

The requirements of the alternative pathway according to PL635

6. Alternative pathways to certification. The state board shall develop and adopt rules providing a method for a person who has not completed an approved educator preparation program as defined under section 13008 to obtain provisional educator certification through an alternative pathway that:

- A. Is designed for candidates who can demonstrate subject matter competency that is directly related to the certificate endorsement being sought and obtained through prior academic achievement or work experience;
- B. May feature an accelerated program of preparation;
- C. Uses mentorship programs that partner teacher candidates with mentor teachers; and
- D. Includes accountability provisions to ensure that teacher candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills established pursuant to section 13012, subsection 2-B prior to issuance of a provisional teacher certificate.

The Alternative Pathways Stakeholder group is comprised of the following members:

Deborah Alden-Special Education Administrator/MSAD#52, Debra Andrews- CTE consultant/DOE, John Backus- Superintendent/MSAD#23, Donald Cannan-MACTE, Mark Cyr-Certification Coordinator/DOE, Todd Fields-Director/ Westbrook Regional Vocational Center, Beth Fisher-Director/ Region #8 Mid-Coast School of Technology, Cynthia Hillman-Forbush-Member Board of Directors/MSAD#29, Larry Grondin- Executive/R.J.Grondin & Sons, Ginny Mott- PTA, Nigel Norton- CTE consultant/DOE, Harry Osgood- Higher Education specialist/DOE, Heidi Sampson-State Board of Education, Philip Shibles- Board of Directors/MSAD#3, Russell Taylor-Teacher/SAD#6, Tim Walton- Director of External Affairs/Cianbro Corporation, Kathy Yardley-Associate Provost and Dean of Academics/University of Maine at Farmington, Greg Zimmel-Teacher/SAD#6, Nancy Perkins-Chair of Certification and Higher Education Committee of State Board of Education.

The Alternative Pathways group met and identified the areas of concern surrounding the need of alternative pathways for those teaching candidates who had not followed the traditional pathway of a teachers' preparation program through a four year accredited institution of higher education. A section of the State Board website was reserved for documents which would serve as resources for the group. Resources such as Chapter 115 Part I & II that contains the certification rules and Chapter 114 that contains rules for teacher preparation programs were included on this site. Chapter 114 was particularly relevant as that rule provides alternate pathways for those candidates who have a Bachelor's degree but did not participate in a traditional teacher program. Armed with the knowledge from the posted resources and from their professional experiences, the group determined that the first area to be addressed would be Career and Technical Educator certification. The research work that had been recently done by the Department of Education Career and Technical division was a contributing factor to this choice. The group recognized that this was only the beginning of the process of analysis of the uniqueness of the needs of the non-traditional teaching candidate. Multiple meetings throughout the summer produced the following recommendation.

The Alternative Pathways that was designed for Career and Technical Educators allows the non-traditional teaching candidate to gain CTE certification through a pathway that will provide the components for success in the 9-12 secondary classroom. The group recognized the factors that would need to be in place for this to be effective. The CTE candidates have used the conditional certificate to meet the requirements as stated in Chapter 115 Part I section 5.4. The conditional certificate will allow the candidate to teach for three years in a supervised scenario. To ensure a successful experience for the teacher candidate and his/her students within the three-year window, the new rule would continue to recognize the current following requirements for each candidate:

1. valid state/ federal license or industry credential or assessment that is recognized by the DOE for the craft or trade to be taught.
2. prior paid work experience in the craft or trade
3. passing score on Basic Skills test.
4. completion of exceptionality class

The current requirement of a pedagogical knowledge and skills assessment would be replaced with the successful completion of the following courses:

1. Curriculum and Instruction
2. Assessment
3. CTE Shop Safety and Classroom/Lab Management
4. Literacy in CTE

And

Within the first year of teaching complete an approved DOE "CTE orientation" program.

The enclosed recommendation is the proposed changes to the CTE endorsement as it would appear in Chapter 115 Part II if accepted.

Highlights of the current information that guided this recommendation:

Reciprocity for all educator certification within the New England states is on-going.

Most states require a bachelor's degree for CTE educators.

Many colleges and universities across the country are offering on-line degrees. Programs currently can be found in Ohio, Oregon, Missouri and University of Phoenix.

Colleges and the universities within our state are creating MOUs regarding bachelor and master degrees in CTE. Some of these programs are awarding credits for work experience.

A well-regarded CTE "boot camp" is already in existence in Maine.

Many southern states are using the guidelines for an exemplary program established by the Southern Regional Educational Laboratory with success. This program provides for a beginning "

boot camp” with cohort sessions throughout the year and concluding with a “boot camp”. This commitment to excellence is highly regarded.

Considerations

The Stakeholders’ group recognizes that the educational landscape of Maine undergoes changes determined by a variety of factors. Our intent is to provide the best conditions that we can for the success of our future CTE candidates within our classrooms. The following considerations acknowledge possible issues and solutions.

Currently, there are no specific CTE teacher training classes offered in the state. There are multiple on-line courses offered by many colleges and universities throughout the United States. Husson College does have a blueprint for offering these programs. Interestingly, there are MOUs being signed between community colleges and some of the universities to offer progression CTE degrees from Bachelor’s to Master’s degrees which could encompass these courses. The Boot Camp that is offered by MACTE is highly regarded in the state. There is no guarantee that this five-day summer program will continue. This program fulfills a critical need for transitional training from the business world to the world of the classroom. If the program ceased to exist, hopefully funding would be provided for a duplicate program to be created by DOE. The Southern Regional Educational Laboratory program for CTE was explored. This program encompasses one week in the summer, cohort meetings throughout the school year and a culminating week the next summer. This “Cadillac” version would be the ideal, but reality (costs) suggests that this is a goal to strive for in the state. A comparison of what we have and what we could have highlights the fact that we must at the minimum keep what we have.

When reviewing the list of endorsements at the beginning of Section 3: Teacher and Educational Specialists: Career and Technical Education Certificates and Endorsements in Chapter 115 Part II, it is important to note that not all of these endorsements have a valid Maine certificate/license or an industry recognized credential/assessment. We currently do not have an industry related assessment system for potential CTE instructors in place to fulfill the need that the new rule will require. This is an area that needs review as we look at the CTE candidates’ endorsements. Work experience is critical in the current awarding of the certificates. More work needs to be done in aligning these industry required standards with the endorsements that are offered.

The deliberations on this particular alternative pathway relied heavily on current research and the working knowledge of members of the stakeholder’s group. The group was very cognizant of the processes that were being used for this approach. This process will be replicated as the group looks at other alternative pathway. The future directions of this Alternative Pathways Stakeholders’s Group will address concerns that were raised in the beginning of our process. Topics for future work are special education technicians transitioning to fully certified teachers, moving from one teaching field to another, and the role of electronic portfolios in the certification process. The group is well aware that there may be other areas that have not been discussed which could change our focus as we delve into addressing the needs of non-traditional candidates who are pursuing becoming fully licensed educators in Maine.