

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2826

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 14, 2021

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 2826.

Under current State Board of Education regulations, a candidate applying to become a teacher may be issued a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS) under the traditional route to teacher certification or a certificate of eligibility (CE) under the alternate route to teacher certification. The CEAS and CE, issued by the State Board of Examiners, authorize an individual to seek and accept employment as a teacher in New Jersey public schools.

The requirements for an individual to be issued a CEAS can be found in current State Board of Education regulations at N.J.A.C.6A:9B-8.2. In general, an individual is eligible to be issued a CEAS if the individual: holds a bachelor's or advanced degree; completed a State Department of Education-approved CEAS educator preparation program; is recommended for State licensure by the CEAS educator preparation program; graduated with at least a 3.00 grade point average (GPA), with certain exceptions; earned a subject-specific endorsement by completing a certain number of subject area courses; and passed a test of subject matter knowledge, currently the Praxis II.

The requirements for an individual to be issued a CE can be found in current State Board of Education regulations at N.J.A.C.6A:9B-8.3. In general, a teacher candidate may be issued a CE if the individual: holds a bachelor's or advanced degree; graduated with at least a 3.00 GPA, with certain exceptions; passed the appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge; completes certain required subject matter course requirements; and, with certain exceptions, passes a test of basic skills, currently the Praxis Core.

This bill would create a limited CEAS and a limited CE for individuals who may not meet one of the general requirements for a CEAS or CE and who are seeking employment in a school district, charter school, or renaissance school after the effective date of the bill. Individuals would be eligible for a limited CEAS if they do not meet one of the following requirements: the minimum GPA requirement, and all other alternative grade point average requirements and exceptions; or the requirement to achieve a

minimum passing score on an appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge (Praxis II) and any related alternative requirements or exceptions. Individuals would be eligible for a limited CE if they do not meet one of the following requirements: any requirement to complete a minimum number of subject area course credits; the minimum GPA requirement; the requirement to achieve a minimum score on a Commissioner of Education-approved test of basic reading, writing, and mathematical skills (Praxis Core) and all other alternative basic skills requirements or exceptions; or the requirement to achieve a minimum passing score on an appropriate State test of subject matter knowledge.

An individual who holds a limited CEAS or limited CE would only be eligible to be hired at certain school districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools that are required to be approved by the Commissioner of Education in order to be permitted to hire such individuals. A district or school seeking to be approved to hire individuals holding the limited certificates must apply to the commissioner. An applicant must demonstrate a sufficient capability to provide support to new teachers and: a demographic disparity between the district's or school's student population and teaching staff; or a shortage of bilingual education teachers; or a critical need to fill teacher vacancies or hardship caused by teacher vacancies.

An individual who is issued a limited CEAS or a limited CE, is hired by a school district, charter school, or renaissance school approved to hire such an individual, and is teaching in the district or school under a provisional instructional certificate, will earn a standard instructional certificate after two evaluations in which the individual scores effective or highly effective. The individual must earn the two evaluations of effective or highly effective within four years of being issued a limited certificate. This would differ from current regulations regarding provisional teacher evaluations, which generally require that a provisional teacher receive at least two years of effective ratings over a consecutive three-year period. This requirement will be in addition to all other requirements for a standard instructional certificate established pursuant to State Board of Education regulations.