

PUBLIC NOTICE

EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Notice of Action of Petition for Rulemaking

State Board of Examiners and Certification

Endorsement for Gifted Education

N.J.A.C. 6A:9B

Petitioner: Lenore Cortina.

Take notice that on January 11, 2017, the New Jersey State Board of Education (State Board) received a petition for rulemaking from the above petitioner requesting the State Board of Education amend N.J.A.C. 6A:9B to add a certification endorsement for gifted education.

The petitioner specifically requested the State Board adopt amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B to add an endorsement that requires candidates to complete 15 credit hours from an accredited university in specified subjects and pass the Praxis Gifted Education test to enable teachers to qualify for a New Jersey endorsement in gifted education. The petitioner also requested for the course content for the endorsement to focus specifically on preparing teachers to develop, implement, and evaluate gifted identification processes, develop programming and appropriately challenging curriculum, and provide effective instruction to gifted and talented students. The petitioner also requested for the State Board to require a teacher to hold a gifted education endorsement in addition to a teaching certificate or to submit documentation of employment in this field for three continuous years to teach in or coordinate programs for gifted students in New Jersey.

The petitioner's request indicated the specific amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B would do the following: require, beginning September 1, 2019, the gifted education endorsement for teachers and coordinators who have full-time, shared, or part-time responsibility for the education of gifted

students. The petitioner's request also proposed an exception when a vacancy occurs in a position in which the duties of a gifted educator are performed. In this case, the petitioner recommended allowing a district board of education to select, for a period not to exceed two years and commencing on the vacancy date, a person who is not a certified gifted teacher/coordinator to continue in the gifted education position on an interim basis.

The petitioner's request also recommended the following requirements to be eligible for a standard certificate: candidates must hold a certificate of eligibility (CE), certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS), or a standard instructional certificate with an endorsement appropriate to the subject or grade level to be taught.

The petitioner's request further recommended candidates be required to complete study in the following gifted education topics as part of the minimum required 15 semester-hour credits in gifted education:

1. One course in introductory principles of gifted education;
2. One course in the social and emotional development of gifted learners;
3. One course in curriculum and instruction for gifted learners; and
4. Two courses in the following areas of gifted education: developing gifted programs; practicum/field experience course; teaching advanced learners in a subject area (mathematics, science, literacy, etc.); creativity and gifted education; gifted education in the urban environment.

The petitioner's request also proposed requiring applicants to submit official transcripts and verification of course completion or provide a record of professional experience by submitting a form filled out by the school district's chief school administrator.

N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1 defines gifted and talented students as "Those students who possess or demonstrate high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities". However, New Jersey does not have

uniform, State-level criteria to identify these students. As such, time is required to develop a shared vision for which students meet the definition in code and to develop recommendations on how to best meet the needs of gifted students in New Jersey.

The Department finds it is also necessary to gather additional data to inform potential rules. For example, the Department would need to gather data including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The number and characteristics of gifted students;
2. Which universities currently offer teacher preparation programs focused on gifted education, and the content of those programs; and
3. District hiring/staffing needs related to gifted educators.

For the reasons listed above, the petitioner's request is hereby denied.

In accordance with N.J.A.C 1:30-4.2, the Department shall subsequently mail to the petitioner, and file with the Office of Administrative Law, a notice of action on the petition.