June 25, 2013

TO: Chief School Administrators
    Directors of Special Education
    Administrators of a State Facility
    Administrators of a Charter School
    Administrators of an Approved Private School for the Disabled
    Administrators of a College Preparation Program for Speech-language Specialist
    Statewide Special Education Advisory Council
    Agencies or Organizations Concerned with Special Education

FROM: Robert R. Higgins, Ph.D., Director
       Office of Certification and Induction
       Peggy McDonald, Director
       Office of Special Education Programs

SUBJECT: Elimination of the Emergency Speech Certificate
         Amendments to requirements for Speech-language specialists
         Clarification regarding Contracted Providers for Speech-language services

This is to inform you that the New Jersey State Board of Education recently adopted amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:9. The amendments, effective July 2, 2013, included changes to subchapter 13, which eliminate the emergency speech-language specialist certificate and establish study requirement options for a new certificate of eligibility for speech-language specialist. Please note that the elimination of the emergency certificate was mandated by federal rules. The amendments also establish employment and study requirements for the subsequent provisional certificate for speech-language specialist, which is issued upon hiring, and the requirements for the permanent or standard certificate.

Please note that no emergency speech certificates (initial or renewal) will be issued after July 2, 2013. However, emergency certificates in effect on July 2, 2013 will remain valid until July 31, 2013.

Individuals who meet the requirements in new subsections N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.6(e)1 or 2 may apply for the certificate of eligibility and seek employment in any public school district or Department-approved private school for students with disabilities. In order to ensure continuity of service, the Office of Certification will expedite all applications for this certificate of eligibility.
Candidates who acquire a speech-language specialist certificate of eligibility and obtain an offer of employment for a speech-language specialist position would then be eligible for the provisional certificate per requirements in the new subsections N.J.A.C. 6A:9-13.6(f) and (g). Should you have any questions regarding provisional certification, please contact Judy Cifone, manager, Certification and Induction, at (609) 984-6377.

With respect to clarification about contracted providers for speech-language services, please note that in addition to the regulations regarding Department-approved clinics and agencies (per N.J.A.C. 6A:14-5.1 and 5.2), the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA) requires state licensure for private practitioners and for individuals employed by private clinics or agencies that contract with the public schools. Thus, school districts should be contracting only with providers who have obtained the appropriate state licensure required by the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

RH/PM/JW/RS

c: Members, State Board of Education
   Commissioner Christopher D. Cerf
   Senior Staff
   Susan Martz
   John Worthington
   Kathy Ehling
   Executive County Superintendents
   Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
   Executive County School Business Administrators
   County Supervisors of Child Study
   Members, NJ LEE Group
   Garden State Coalition of Schools