



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

Alabama
State Board
of Education

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Governor Kay Ivey
President

The ALSDE Takes New Approach to Preparing Special Education Teachers
Teachers in Grades 6-12 will Soon Have an Additional Option for Earning Certification

Jackie Zeigler
District I

MONTGOMERY, AL – In Alabama, like in most of the nation; finding, recruiting, and retaining qualified teachers has become a difficult task – especially when looking for Special Education teachers. In its efforts to be innovative while meeting the needs of students, the Alabama State Department of Education has developed a new approach for preparing Special Education teachers for students in grades 6 through 12.

Tracie West
District II

State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Eric Mackey, recently announced that beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, Alabama will provide another option for individuals to earn a Class B certificate endorsed for Collaborative Special Education (6-12).

Stephanie Bell
District III

This new option will comply with federal guidelines while for the first time, allowing the state to issue a Temporary Special Education Certificate to get much needed teachers into Alabama’s classrooms and providing services for students who need this specific support. Mackey said the new certification option is similar to the Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field (PCTF) but is tailored specifically to meet the needs of special education teachers and their students.

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV
Vice President

“Our goal is to remove as many barriers as possible to make sure qualified, hardworking individuals who have a passion for working with students with special needs are able to do so,” Mackey said. “We are following every necessary guideline and making sure that those who take this pathway are qualified and prepared to teach this subpopulation of our total student body.”

Tonya S. Chestnut, Ed.D.
District V

So far, eight universities – Jacksonville State University, Troy University, Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, University of Alabama Huntsville, Athens State University, University of North Alabama, and University of West Alabama, have been authorized to provide coursework for this new certification pathway. Although some details are still being worked out, the following are some of the basic requirements for the new certification efforts:

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI

Belinda McRae
District VII

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII
President Pro Tem

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer

1. An applicant for the first Temporary Special Education Certificate must:
 - (a) Hold at least a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
 - (b) Meet GPA requirements applicable to the PCTF approach.
 - (c) Document enrollment in at least one course provided by a college or university approved to provide this approach.

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2. At the request of a local superintendent, the ALSDE will issue up to three, one-year certificates for a person who is making progress toward completing this approach.
3. A person will be eligible to receive a Class B certificate endorsed for Collaborative Special Education (Grades 6-12) based on documentation of:
 - (a) At least one full year of full-time special education teaching experience in Grades 6-12 while holding a Temporary Special Education Certificate, with oversight by an approved mentor.
 - (b) Credit (with a grade of “C” or better) for a bundle of five courses taken from one college/university and approved to address five major topics: survey of special education, collaboration/consultation, methods and assessment, special education laws, and behavior analysis/modification.
 - (c) Completion of special education modules developed by the ALSDE
 - (d) A passing score on the Praxis test for special education

Mackey said he anticipates other colleges and universities will be approved to provide this particular form certification in the near future.

Mackey said he would like to provide this option for potential elementary school special education teachers as well, but first we must determine how to address reading coursework requirements applicable to new elementary teachers.

More information will be made available at www.alabamaachievers.org as criteria and application forms are developed.

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