

2023 -- S 0488

LC001758

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

Introduced By: Senators Acosta, Lawson, Mack, Picard, Gallo, and Valverde

Date Introduced: March 07, 2023

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 16-11-2.3 and 16-11-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-11 entitled  
2 "Certification of Teachers [See Title 16 Chapter 97 — The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]"  
3 are hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **16-11-2.3. Standardized testing — Issuance of certificates.**

5 (a) No person who obtained an initial certificate prior to January 8, 2002 shall be barred  
6 from certification under this chapter solely because of his or her score on any standardized teacher's  
7 examination; provided, however, that he or she successfully completes an assessment, based on  
8 criteria established by the board of ~~regents for elementary and secondary~~ education, in accordance  
9 with 34 CFR § 200.56.

10 (b) The board of ~~regents for elementary and secondary~~ education may administer a written  
11 examination to prospective teachers seeking certification.

12 (c) Effective July 1, 2023, all currently certified teachers as of July 1, 2023, shall have their  
13 certifications automatically extended for three (3) years, without fee or penalty. This shall include  
14 all teacher certifications issued by the board of education or the department of education, including,  
15 but not limited to, emergency certifications with conditions.

16 (d) In order to promote teacher recruitment, for the three (3) year period from July 1, 2023,  
17 through to June 30, 2026 (the "period"), the board of education shall waive all fees to apply for a  
18 teacher initial certification for that period, and shall waive all Praxis examination fees for that year  
19 period.

1           **16-11-3. Certificates without examination.**

2           (a) The board of ~~regents for elementary and secondary~~ education may, in its discretion,  
3 issue certificates of qualification without examination to persons who may present evidence of  
4 qualification and shall comply with the regulations of the board. Provided, that any teacher who is  
5 certified in two (2) fields or subjects of science, other than general science, shall also be  
6 automatically certified in the field or subject of general science without the need for examination  
7 or other proof of qualifications in the subject of general science.

8           (b) Any teacher holding a valid Rhode Island teacher certification and who has at least  
9 three (3) years of certified teaching experience, shall be allowed to acquire an additional  
10 certification(s) through examination or content coursework so long as the teacher has a minimum  
11 of three (3) years of certified teaching experience.

12           SECTION 3. Chapter 16-11 of the General Laws entitled "Certification of Teachers [See  
13 Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding  
14 thereto the following section:

15           **16-11-11. Educator preparation programs.**

16           The Rhode Island department of elementary and secondary education shall review and  
17 revise as necessary its rules and regulations governing the licensure of teachers and administrators.  
18 The rules and regulations shall be revised so as to create and permit multiple pathways and  
19 flexibility in the credential requirements for both undergraduate and post-baccalaureate degrees to  
20 obtain teacher or administrator certification. In so promulgating these rules and regulations, or  
21 revisions thereto, the department may incorporate awarding credit for non-traditional classes,  
22 work/life experience that is deemed tantamount to formal classwork, and permitting teacher and  
23 administrator candidates to obtain course credit by demonstrating course competency through a test  
24 or other demonstration of competency so as to allow waiver of the course and to provide credit for  
25 the course.

26           SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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1           This act would extend teacher certifications without fee or penalty for three (3) years for  
2 teachers who hold certifications as of July 1, 2023. In addition, during this period, fees for initial  
3 certification and for the Praxis examination to certification fees would also be waived. This act  
4 would permit a teacher who has three (3) years of certified teaching experience, to acquire an  
5 additional certification through examination or content coursework. This act would also direct the  
6 department of elementary and secondary education to revise its regulations pertaining to  
7 certification to create multiple pathways to obtain teacher and administrator certification.

8           This act would take effect upon passage.

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