

2020 -- S 2376

LC004194

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

Introduced By: Senators Paolino, Pearson, Gallo, Metts, and Ciccone

Date Introduced: February 13, 2020

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-11 of the General Laws entitled "Certification of Teachers [See
2 Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]" is hereby amended by adding
3 thereto the following section:

4 **16-11-10. Teacher certification for specialty skills.**

5 (a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following
6 meanings:

7 (1) "Local education agency" (LEA) includes all of the following within the state:

8 (i) Public school districts;

9 (ii) Regional school districts;

10 (iii) State-operated schools;

11 (iv) Regional collaborative schools; and

12 (v) Charter schools and mayoral academies.

13 (2) "Specialty skills" means proficiency or expertise in in-demand subject matters
14 including, but not limited to, traditional academic, career and technical, or other college or career
15 pathway program areas, knowledge about which is obtained by an individual through education
16 or experience, and for which Rhode Island elementary and secondary schools face difficulty
17 finding qualified educators with the appropriate certification.

18 (b) To be eligible for certification as an educator with specialty skills, the candidate shall:

19 (1) Hold a bachelor's degree or a higher degree from an accredited college or university

- 1 with a major course appropriate to the instructional field;
- 2 (2) Obtain a written request from the LEA that proposes to employ the individual under a
3 specialty skills certificate; and
- 4 (3) Demonstrate the content knowledge necessary to be an effective educator in the
5 subject matter area using a collection of indicators that may include, but need not be limited to:
- 6 (i) Relevant work experience in the subject matter area in an amount to be determined by
7 the council; or
- 8 (ii) A subject matter assessment the council may prescribe; or
- 9 (iii) A combination of subsections (b)(3)(i) and (b)(3)(ii) of this section.
- 10 (c) A candidate who completes the requirements in this subsection shall be issued a
11 specialty skills certificate.
- 12 (d) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education (the “commissioner”) shall
13 establish standards for the training, support, and supervision of individuals with specialty skills
14 certificates.
- 15 (e) Each LEA seeking to hire an individual with a specialty skills certificate must submit
16 a plan to the department of education (the “department”), which details how the LEA will train,
17 support, supervise, and evaluate such individuals.
- 18 (f) The department may issue standard LEA plans, which LEAs may implement in lieu of
19 developing original plans. The department shall coordinate the training efforts of LEAs, and shall
20 ensure that LEA training programs meet fair, substantive, and comprehensive professional
21 development standards.
- 22 (g) A specialty skills certificate issued pursuant to this section shall be in effect for a
23 period of up to three (3) years. During this time, the certificate holder shall successfully complete
24 the requirements to receive a full certificate, as defined by the council on elementary and
25 secondary education.
- 26 (h) The department shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of
27 this section.

28 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION -- CERTIFICATION OF TEACHERS

- 1 This act would establish a procedure for the certification of educators with specialty
- 2 skills.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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