



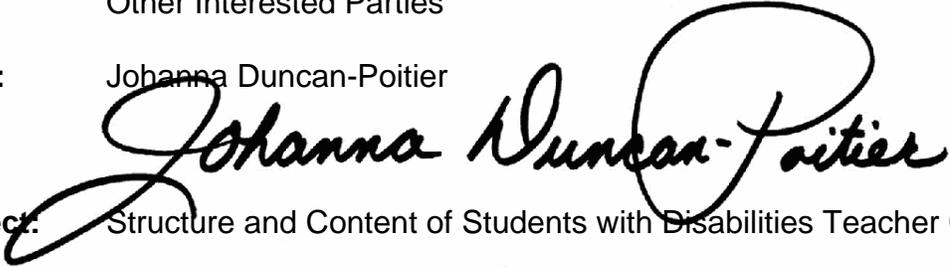
SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION – P-16  
Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education  
Office of Higher Education

CEO 08-01

January 14, 2008

**To:** Presidents of Colleges and Universities with Teacher Education Programs  
Deans and Directors of Teacher Education Programs  
New York City Department of Education  
District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public Schools  
Nonpublic School Superintendents  
Administrators of Charter Schools  
School Personnel Administrators  
New York State United Teachers  
National Education Association of New York  
United Federation of Teachers  
Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education Services  
Other Interested Parties

**From:** Johanna Duncan-Poitier

**Subject:**  Structure and Content of Students with Disabilities Teacher Certification

I write to seek your input on a preliminary proposal to revise the structure and content of Students with Disabilities teacher certification to increase the supply of effective special education teachers, particularly at the secondary level.

Data analysis and feedback from the field suggests there will be a severe shortage of special education teachers at the secondary level. In 2005, for example, less than 20 percent of new special education teachers were certified in Grades 5-9 or 7-12 (combined), yet nearly one-half of students with disabilities were in Grades 7-12. To address this critical need, we prepared a preliminary proposal informed by the Board of Regents; a special education work group charged by the Department; and an internal assessment of the certification structure, trend data, and workforce supply research. Elements of the current and proposed certification structures are compared below:

| <b><i>Current</i> Special Education Certification Area</b> | <b>Number of Cert. Titles</b> | <b><i>Proposed</i> Special Education Certification Area</b>   | <b><i>Proposed</i> Number of Cert. Titles</b> |
|--|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Birth - Grade 2  | 1                             | Birth - Grade 3   | 1   |
| Grades 1-6   | 1                             | Grades 1-6  | 1   |
| ( <i>new</i> )   | 0                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Childhood extension for Early Childhood certificates</li> <li>· Early Childhood and Adolescence extensions for Childhood certificates</li> </ul> | 0   |
| Grades 5-9 generalist and subject specialists              | 22                            | ( <i>Eliminate Grades 5-9 certification</i> )   | 0   |
| Grades 7-12 subject specialists                            | 21                            | Grades 7-12 generalist (with enriched academic core)  | 1   |
| <b>TOTAL Current Special Education Certificates:</b>       | <b>45</b>                     | <b>TOTAL Proposed Special Education Certificates:</b>   | <b>3</b><br>+ 2 extensions                    |

The goals of the proposed certification structure are to ensure an adequate supply of special educators and to maintain high certification standards. For more information about the considerations that informed this structure, please review the full special education proposal at the following address:

**<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2007Meetings/December2007/1207heppd2.doc>**

As part of reviewing the teaching policy it enacted in 1998, the Board of Regents endorsed the proposal in December 2007 as a first step in revisiting special education teacher certification. The foundation for the proposal is a model that assumes collaboration between certified general education and special education teachers, particularly at the secondary level. That model has implications for how we prepare and utilize general *and* special education teachers. Likewise, we must consider how to best align preparation and practice with mandates such as No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—and meet the needs of all instructional delivery models, including inclusive classrooms, special classes, and resource rooms.

I encourage you to review the full proposal with your colleagues and **provide feedback to Associate Commissioner Joseph Frey by February 15, 2008** at the following address:

Joseph P. Frey, Associate Commissioner  
Office of Higher Education  
New York State Education Department  
Room 977, Education Building Annex  
Albany, New York 12234  
Email: [jfrey@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:jfrey@mail.nysed.gov)

In addition to considering this proposal, please provide ideas about (or approaches to) two related options that may further impact the supply of special education teachers:

- 1) Endorsement for general education teachers to teach special education
  - What credentials should be required to qualify a general education teacher to teach special education?
  - What practice limits should there be on a special education endorsement credential?
- 2) Alternative routes to special education teacher certification
  - How can we ensure that teachers prepared through alternative routes are equipped to be highly effective practitioners, without discouraging entry into special education as a teaching career?

Our next steps, in consultation with the field, include drafting regulations to redefine special education certification. Our goal is to have revised traditional-route teacher preparation programs in place as early as fall 2009. Thank you for your continuing commitment to high-quality teaching for students of all abilities, and I look forward to your input.

cc: Board of Regents  
Richard P. Mills  
Joseph P. Frey