

MEMORANDUM

To: Leah Voorhies, Assistant Superintendent of Student Support
From: Utah Special Education Advisory Panel
Subject: Teacher Licensure
Date: September 27, 2017

In our role as an advisory panel, we would like to provide input and recommendations to the Special Education Section of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to improve services for students with disabilities, through the licensing process of educators. We would like to ensure students are being taught by a licensed professional who has training in designing and delivering instruction for students in the classroom. With our classrooms placing high demands on teachers, we believe they should be provided with the best preparation possible before licensing and through the relicensing process. Thus, it is important that all parties look carefully at the licensing process that is used.

Recommendations:

- The Utah State Board of Education, local education agencies (LEAs), and institutes of higher education (IHEs) should collaborate to prepare high quality educators that meet the needs of LEAs.
- As students with disabilities are spending more time in the general education setting, it is vital that all pre-service educators receive training on best practices that benefit all students, such as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, behavior training, differentiation, etc.
- Identify a minimum competency requirement for the proposed Associate Educator and LEA-Specific Licenses, as well as a time limit for being eligible to teach with one of those licenses.
- Consider identifying limits for those with Associate Educator and LEA-Specific Licenses as students with disabilities, especially those with severe disabilities, require specialized instruction and supports that would likely exceed the competencies of those without a Professional Educator License.
- Consider limiting the number of LEA-Specific Licenses allotted to a district or charter school director.
- A teacher holding an Associate Educator License or an LEA-Specific License should be paired with a mentor teacher or coach holding a Professional Educator License.
- Offer incentives to those holding Professional Educator Licenses to be mentor teachers and coaches.
- Create a well-defined path and offer incentives for moving from an Associate Educator License or an LEA-Specific License to a Professional Educator License.
- Recommend to LEAs that they give preference to those with Professional Educator Licenses when hiring personnel.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these recommendations. We as a panel appreciate all of your efforts on behalf of children with disabilities throughout the State of Utah.