

Board of Regents Standards for Alternative Route to Certification Programs

- a. **Purpose** – In order to insure that every child is served by well prepared educators in both professional expertise and content area knowledge, the Rhode Island Department of Education may approve alternative educator preparation programs. Programs may be designed to serve any of the following purposes:
1. Meet the demand for qualified teachers in high need certification areas
 2. Recruit teachers to staff schools in high need local education agencies (LEAs)
 3. Increase the number of qualified candidates from groups that are underrepresented in the Rhode Island teaching force
 4. Provide rigorous, high quality preparation through an expedited track to certification
 5. Attract highly motivated individuals who bring subject matter expertise to the profession
- b. **Definitions** –
1. **Alternative educator preparation program** – a program that provides preparation to educator candidates who serve as teachers of record while completing the approved program. These programs may be offered by an institution of higher education, a professional organization or a private service provider.
 2. **Teacher of record** –
 - i. Teachers that are responsible for content instruction and determining student grades, or
 - ii. Administrators or other education service providers that perform the functions allowed by their program certificate area.
- c. **Approval of program** – To be approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education an alternative educator preparation program must:
1. Meet the RI Program Approval (RIPA) Standards and participate in regular program review as defined in the Rhode Island Department of Education Teacher Preparation Approval Guidelines. Notwithstanding language to the contrary within RIPA, any reference to institutions of higher education or colleges and universities shall be interpreted to include private service providers and other professional organizations for the purposes of this section.
 2. Develop a partnership with one LEA or consortium of LEAs that demonstrates a commitment by the LEA(s) to hire and supervise candidates as teachers of record while enrolled in an approved alternative route to certification program.

3. Be designed and delivered in a way that is responsive to needs of candidates and LEAs through a measurable system of assessment as defined in RIPA.
4. Private service providers and other professional organizations do not require accreditation by NEASC.

- d. **Program Components** – The RIPA approval process and the standards contained therein apply to both traditional and alternative educator preparation programs. Alternative certification programs must design program components that align to RIPA standards and must:
1. Ensure that candidates meet eligibility requirements for their certificate area prior to entering an approved program
 2. Include rigorous admission criteria that include:
 - i. a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; and for secondary areas a major in, or closely related to, the intended teaching field or demonstration of content knowledge by meeting other Regents approved content knowledge measures as they are developed and contained in RI certification regulations;
 - ii. a minimum cumulative grade point average of "B" (3.00 on a 4.00 scale) in undergraduate studies; or in at least 24 semester hours of graduate study;
 - iii. other admission criteria identified by the program to meet Rhode Island Program Approval standards
 3. Include the successful completion of an intensive pre-service experience, of a minimum of 5 weeks, that addresses the unique needs of the certificate areas and prepares individuals to begin serving as the educator of record, including, but not limited to, instruction in grade-level appropriate pedagogy, classroom management, and the statutes and regulations governing public education and students' rights . The pre-service experience must also include opportunities for candidates to apply knowledge and skills.
 4. Include an on-going curriculum during the school year through seminars or courses.
 5. Require individuals working on an alternative program certificate to serve as the teacher of record for a minimum of one school year.
 6. Ensure on-going professional support and supervision of candidates by educators who model effective practice and assume responsibility for supporting prospective colleagues. Program and district personnel, including but not limited to a district-assigned mentor, consistent with Board of Regents' standards for induction and mentoring, must provide field-based support and supervision in such a way that supports the development of prospective educators. Ongoing feedback provided to candidates must focus on improving candidate performance.

- e. **Certification –**
 1. Individuals in alternative route to certification programs will hold an alternative route program certificate that allows them to serve as the teacher of record for at least one school year.
 2. Upon successful completion of all program requirements, state testing requirements and recommendation for licensure, individuals will be eligible for a Rhode Island professional certificate.

- f. **Highly qualified –** Program participants will be considered “highly qualified” in NCLB core content areas under NCLB-Highly Qualified Teacher while working on the alternative route program certificate if the program meets NCLB requirements for alternative certification programs.