



State of Arizona
Department of Education

To: Arizona's School District and Charter School Personnel Directors
From: Arizona Department of Education, Certification Unit
Date: April 30, 2015
Subject: Certification Rule Changes

In response to feedback from the field regarding the need to reduce unnecessary burdens on educators and streamline certification processes, the Arizona Department of Education proposed multiple legislative and State Board rule changes related to the certification of Arizona educators. As a result of these proposals, House Bill 2577, legislation which impacts Reciprocal teaching and Secondary STEM certificates, was signed into law and multiple State Board rule changes were approved. Effective May 4, 2015, the changes outlined below will be implemented by the Certification Unit.

Legislative Changes

Reciprocal Certificate Timeframe

The timeframe of the Reciprocal teaching and administrative certificates has been extended from one year to three years. Therefore, Reciprocal certificate holders will have **three years** from date of certificate issuance to satisfy the Arizona and US Constitutions, Structured English Immersion (SEI) endorsement, and Educator exam requirements. Please note that teachers who are certified to teach History, Political Science/American Government, or Middle Grade Social Studies must satisfy the Arizona and US constitution requirements within **one year**. Also, while the SEI endorsement and subject knowledge exam requirements may be waived for up to three years under reciprocity, teachers are required to be highly qualified at time of hire. Teachers in an English language development classroom are required to hold a valid SEI, English as a Second Language, or Bilingual endorsement to meet highly qualified requirements.

Fingerprint reciprocity for certificate applicants no longer exists. All certificate applicants will be required to submit a copy of a valid Arizona Department of Public Safety Identity Verified Prints (IVP) clearance card **or** a conditional early release form signed by a district superintendent/charter school administrator and proof of application for an IVP card.

Secondary STEM Certificate Technical Change

The grade level of the Secondary STEM certificate has been expanded from grades 7-12 to grades 6-12.





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State Board Rule Changes

Reciprocal Certificate Timeframe

State Board rule reflects statute change to extend reciprocal certificates from one year to three years.

Bilingual Endorsement

The Bilingual endorsement rule has been updated to allow applicants to meet second language proficiency requirements by passing an appropriate National Evaluation Series (NES) foreign language exam or comparable out of state exam.

Early Childhood Endorsement

Two rule changes were approved for the Early Childhood endorsement:

- A Provisional Early Childhood endorsement was created which allows educators to meet the requirements for a full Early Childhood endorsement within three (3) years. To qualify for the Provisional Early Childhood endorsement, applicants must hold a valid Arizona Elementary or Special Education teaching certificate and pass the Arizona Educator Proficiency Assessment (AEPA) Subject Knowledge Early Childhood (# AZ036) exam.
- Elementary and special education certified teachers may now qualify for a full Early Childhood endorsement by passing the AEPA Subject Knowledge Early Childhood exam (#AZ036) and submitting verification of three years of full-time teaching in Birth-grade 3. The time restriction in Option C no longer exists.

Implementation of Certification Rules

The Certification unit has updated all applicable requirement forms and applications to reflect the rule changes. Additionally, the following policies will be implemented:

- Educators who are currently certified with a one-year Reciprocal teaching certificate may apply to extend their certificate to three years from date of issue. An application and \$20 fee per certificate will be required to extend the certificate(s).
- Educators who hold a Secondary STEM certificate may receive an updated certificate reflecting the 6-12 grade range by submitting a completed Application for Name Change/Duplicate Copy to the Certification office. The \$20 duplicate copy fee will be waived for Secondary STEM certificate holders until July 31, 2015.

