



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Personnel Administrators
Special Education Directors

FROM: Rebecca Davis
Director, Office of Special Education Services

Mary Hipp
Director, Office of Educator Services

DATE: November 14, 2019

RE: Educator Certification Requirements for Speech-Language Personnel

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarifying guidance related to the provision of speech-language services in South Carolina public schools. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed in December 2015, made several changes to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The ESSA eliminated all references to the term "highly qualified," including all requirements associated with the term, and replaced the qualifications with a single requirement for all special education personnel in the state to obtain full state certification as a special education teacher. This requirement includes teachers who participate in an alternate route to certification as a special educator, except with respect to any teacher teaching in a public charter school who shall meet the requirements set forth in the state's public charter school law. (Every Student Succeeds Act, 114-95 § 9214(d)(2)).

Both federal statutes and regulations cede authority to the state educational agency (SEA) to determine individuals who are appropriately credentialed to provide special education and related services to students in the public schools of the state. Each individual employed in an instructional classroom teaching position or who serves in a position designed for the support of the instructional program in a public school of this state must hold an appropriate South Carolina teaching credential, as per the requirements of S.C. Code Ann. §59-5-60, S.C. Code Ann. §59-25-110, and the State Board of Education (SBE) Regulation 43-50.

Pursuant to this SBE regulation, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requires that an individual providing special education or related services to public school students must hold an

appropriate educator certificate. This requirement applies to individuals employed directly by school districts and has been the longstanding guidance from the SCDE. **Effective with the 2020-21 school year**, this requirement also applies to individuals contracted by school districts through a third-party vendor or service provider.

The SBE regulations establish two pathways to educator certification for eligible speech-language personnel.

1. [SBE Regulation 43-64](#), Requirements for Initial Certification at the Advanced Level, provides for the issuance of an Initial or Professional educator certificate to an individual who has completed a master's level program approved by the SBE. Programs meeting requirements for SBE approval under Regulation 43-64 must meet the standards of the American Speech Hearing Association (ASHA) and include clinical experiences in school settings. Individuals applying for an educator certificate based on completion of a program approved for educator certification follow standard [application procedures](#).
2. [SBE Regulation 43-53](#), Credential Classification, provides for the issuance of an Internship certificate to "any individual who holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology issued by the American Speech-Hearing Association (ASHA) or who has completed a master's degree that includes the academic and clinical requirements for the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence and has achieved the minimum qualifying score on the required certification examination(s)." For certification purposes, the SBE-required examination is Praxis 5331: Speech-Language Pathology, with a qualifying score of 162—the same assessment and qualifying score required by ASHA for the issuance of the Certificate of Clinical Competence. Individuals who apply for an [Internship certificate](#) and provide a valid ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence for Speech-Language Pathology are not required to submit the Praxis score to the SCDE.

Some local educational agencies (LEAs) use contracted speech-language personnel. Given the requirements from the SBE Regulations 43-50 and 43-53, those individuals must also hold the appropriate educator certificate in order to provide services within the public school setting. All LEAs using contracted speech-language personnel should ensure that those individuals have the appropriate educator certificate. Any employee of a contracted speech-language service provider working in South Carolina public schools must complete the necessary steps to obtain certification beginning with the 2020-21 school year. The SCDE Office of Educator Services and the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development will provide additional guidance to districts regarding certification and evaluation processes for those individuals. In exercising its oversight responsibilities, the SCDE may monitor in one or more ways to ensure that all staff are appropriately credentialed.

For additional information regarding the educator certification requirements for speech-language personnel, please contact Mary Hipp at mhipp@ed.sc.gov, 803-896-0352. For additional information regarding special education and related services, please contact Beckie Davis at rcdavis@ed.sc.gov, 803-734-8224.