

ASSEMBLY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4689

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 4, 2024

The Assembly State and Local Government Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4689.

As amended, this bill requires the State Board of Education to authorize a route to teacher certification for candidates seeking a certificate of eligibility with a preschool through grade three endorsement or an elementary school (kindergarten through grade six) endorsement who possess a Montessori teaching credential. To be eligible for this route to teacher certification, a candidate is required to, at minimum:

(1) hold a Montessori teaching credential issued by the American Montessori Society, the Association of Montessori International, or an institution accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education;

(2) hold a bachelor's degree in any field from an accredited institution of higher education; and

(3) meet the applicable test requirements for a certificate of eligibility.

The bill also stipulates that a candidate seeking a certificate of eligibility with a preschool through grade three endorsement or an elementary school (kindergarten through grade six) endorsement who meets the criteria established under the bill is not required to complete:

- 50 hours of pre-professional experience or credits of preschool through grade three pedagogy;
- 350 hours of credits or coursework after employment if the candidate is seeking an elementary school (kindergarten through grade six) endorsement; or
- 24 credits after employment if the candidate is seeking a preschool through grade three endorsement.

Candidates who meet the requirements for eligibility set forth in this bill are not required to complete a State-approved educator preparation program prior to certification.

Also under the bill, upon completion of the certification requirements, a candidate is to be issued a certificate of eligibility by the Board of Examiners. This bill defines "certificate of eligibility" as

a certificate with lifetime validity issued by the State Board of Examiners to candidates who meet degree, academic, and applicable test requirements for teacher certification.

The amended bill also requires the Department of Education to conduct a study on the route to teacher certification for candidates with a Montessori teaching credential established under the bill. The department, at a minimum, is required to collect information on the number of candidates with a Montessori teaching credential issued a certification through the route established by the bill; and the Montessori program the candidate completed in order to be eligible for the certification route established by the bill.

Finally, the amended bill requires a board of education to report annually to the Commissioner of Education, for a period of five years, or as long as the commissioner deems necessary, the number of teachers hired by the board who possess a Montessori teaching credential and a certificate of eligibility established by the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- specify that the provisions of the bill apply to candidates seeking a certificate of eligibility with a preschool through grade three endorsement or an elementary school (kindergarten through grade six) endorsement;
- specify that in order to obtain a provisional or standard instructional certificate, a candidate seeking a certificate of eligibility with a preschool through grade three endorsement or an elementary school (kindergarten through six) endorsement who meets the criteria established under this bill is not required to complete:
 - 50 hours of pre-professional experience or credits of preschool through grade three pedagogy;
 - 350 hours of credits or coursework after employment if the candidate is seeking an elementary school (kindergarten through grade six) endorsement; or
 - 24 credits after employment if the candidate is seeking a preschool through grade three endorsement;
- require the Department of Education to conduct a study on the route to teacher certification established under the bill; and
- require a board of education to report annually to the Commissioner of Education the number of teachers hired by the board who possess a Montessori teaching credential and a certificate of eligibility established by the bill. A board of education is required to report this information for a period of five years, or as long as the commissioner deems necessary.