

West Virginia Alternative Certification Guidance Document





**WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION
2015-2016**

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Implementation Timeline

Governor Tomblin signs HB 2005 enacting W.Va. Code §18A-3-1	Effective June 12, 2015
WVDE engaged stakeholders and consulted with the Secretary of Education and the Arts to promulgate a rule	May – July 2015
WVBE voted to place <i>WVBE Policy 5901 – Alternative Programs for the Education of Teachers</i> on public comment for a period of 30 days	August 2015
WVBE voted to repeal and replace <i>WVBE Policy 5901 – Alternative Programs for the Education of Teachers</i>	September 10, 2015
<i>WVBE Policy 5901 – Alternative Programs for the Education of Teachers</i>	Effective October 13, 2015
Eight (8) members are appointed to the Alternative Certification Educator Preparation Program Review Board (ACEPPRB)	October – November 2015
Technical Assistance is provided to District Personnel Directors regarding the requirements for submitting a proposal to offer a rigorous alternative program for teacher certification	September – December 2015
Alternative Certification – Guidance document is released	December 2015
Members of the ACEPPRB are trained in the program review process and will establish a meeting/review calendar	December 2015
At least 60 days prior to the next scheduled ACEPPRB meeting, the school district must send a notification of intent to submit an alternative certification partnership program proposal to the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure (WVDE). The ACEPPRB schedule will be posted to the WVDE web site.	December 2015
The online portal for program proposals will be available for schools districts to submit their alternative certification program proposal for review by the ACEPPRB	January 1, 2016
The ACEPPRB will conduct reviews of all programs submitted through the online portal and recommendations will be one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Initial Approval Status:</i> The ACEPPRB finds that the proposal meets criteria established in W.Va. Code §18A-3-1 and WVBE Policy 5901 and recommends approval be granted for a period of up to five years. <i>Denial:</i> The ACEPPRB finds that the proposal does not meet the requirements of WVBE Policy 5901 and/or fails to provide the required documentation/complete application. 	Beginning March 2016 ACEPPRB meetings February-March June-July September-October Virtual review as needed
Approved alternative certification programs may begin accepting and preparing eligible candidates for critical shortage area teaching vacancies that have been posted for ten (10) days and for which no fully certified applicants have applied.	Upon WVBE approval

Who is eligible to become an approved Alternative Certification Program Provider?

A WV **school district** may offer a rigorous alternative program for teacher certification in partnership with one or more of the following:

- » An **institution of higher education** (IHE) with an accredited program for the education of professional educators that has been approved by the WVBE;
- » An **entity affiliated with an institution of higher education** that has an accredited program for the education of professional educators that has been approved by the WVBE;
- » The **West Virginia Department of Education** (WVDE); or
- » A **Regional Education Service Agency** (RESA).

What is an entity affiliated with an institution of higher education?

An entity affiliated with an IHE is one member of a partnership of a WVBE-approved alternative certification program for the education of teachers that is neither a West Virginia school or school district, the WVDE, nor a regional education service agency, but **has an official agreement or contract with** a regionally accredited institution of higher education that has an accredited program for the education of professional educators **that has been approved by the State Board**, that provides for responsibilities including, but not limited to, recruitment, support, supervision, and mentoring of the alternative program teachers who are enrolled in its program.

How does a school district form a Partnership?

Using this guidance document and the Guidance Document for Alternative Certification Program Proposals (based on *WVBE Policy 5901 – Alternative Programs for the Education of Teachers*), WV school districts should determine what program components may be provided by the school and/or the district, and what will need to be provided by the partner(s). For example, the school or school district may determine they have the capacity to utilize their *Support for Improving Professional Practice (WV SIPP)* plan to provide the required professional support team components. However, some schools/districts may determine they do not have the capacity to provide this additional support to candidates, therefore, may decide to utilize a partner for this component.

Multiple partners may be utilized to meet the full requirements of establishing an alternative certification program. For example, one partner may provide support to a candidate, while another partner may provide pedagogy components. It is important to consider the capacity of each partner in adopting a partnership agreement.

If I do not meet the criteria to be a required partner, may I be involved in an alternative certification program?

Yes. A school district and/or any of the required partners may choose to include additional contracted services in order to provide components of the required program. However, contracted services may not serve as a required partner.

What is an Alternative Certification (AC) Partnership Agreement and what must an AC Partnership Agreement include?

The AC partnership agreement is a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which governs how the partnership will conduct its alternative program, identifies the rights and responsibilities of each program partner, and includes signatures representing each partner. WVBE Policy 5901 Section 4.2 establishes the minimum components of an AC partnership agreement. The AC partnership agreement is a binding part of the Alternative Certification Program Proposal.

The AC partnership agreement requires the following information:

1. Procedures and criteria for determining eligibility to enroll in the alternative program
2. Acknowledgment that vacancy is to be advertised at least twice (for a ten day period), and if no certified teacher applies, only then may the partnership consider enrolling a person in the alternative program
3. Acknowledgment of the procedures and criteria for making a formal offer of employment to a person who is eligible to enroll in the alternative program
4. A description of the categories, methods and sources of instruction that the alternative program will provide
5. A description of the on-the-job training and supervision that the alternative program will provide
6. A description of the academic and performance standards that an alternative program teacher shall satisfy to receive the partnership's recommendation that the State Superintendent issue a professional teaching certificate to the program completer. Include the description and rubrics of the three minimally-required performance assessments during the candidate's first year in the alternative certification program. (WVBE Policy 5901, section 8.1.c.1)
7. A description of the selection and training of the professional support team which includes a list of professional support team members and job titles. Acknowledge that the professional support team shall be trained by and in coordination with the West Virginia Center for Professional Development.
8. A detailed description of provisions for determining tuition or other charges, if any, relating to an alternative program (guided by WVBE Policy 5901, section 8.1.j). A partnership may not impose charges for participation in an alternative program unless tuition or other charges are necessary to offset the partnership's cost of providing the alternative program.
9. Acknowledgement that the employing school district will renew the alternative program teacher's contract as long as the alternative program teacher makes satisfactory progress. The alternative certificate may be renewed two times (for a total of three years).
10. A description of any other provisions that the partners consider necessary or helpful to ensure that the alternative program operates in accordance with WV State Code and WVBE Policy.

How is a program developed?

- Step 1: Using WVBE Policy 5901, this guidance document and the Guidance Document for Alternative Certification Program Proposals, WV school districts with teacher shortage areas collaborate with partner(s) (RESA, IHE, WVDE, or an entity affiliated with an IHE) to discuss the development of a partnership and begin designing a program proposal. All required components of the alternative certification program must be included in the proposal.
- Step 2: At least sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled ACEPPRB meeting, the school district must send a notification of intent to submit an alternative certification partnership program proposal to the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure (WVDE). The ACEPPRB annual schedule will be posted to the WVDE web site once it is established by the eight members.
- Step 3: At least thirty (30) days prior to the ACEPPRB's scheduled meeting, the district must submit the **complete** program proposal (including the signature page with all partnership signatures) using the online program proposal portal.

What is the Alternative Certification Educator Preparation Program Review Board (ACEPPRB)?

The ACEPPRB shall be comprised of eight members selected from a pool of trained educators; two members shall represent higher education (one representative appointed by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and one representative appointed by the West Virginia Independent Colleges and Universities); three members (one who was alternatively prepared) shall represent public education, one at each programmatic level for elementary, middle school and high school, appointed by the WVBE; one district/central office representative, also appointed by the WVBE; one principal representing the West Virginia Center for Professional Development (CPD) appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Education and the Arts; and one representative from the WWCPTS appointed by its chairperson.

The terms of the ACEPPRB members shall be for three years. An ACEPPRB member must exempt himself/herself from deliberations and actions related to the status of an alternative certification program's approval if he/she is an employee of any member of the partnerships that have a proposal under the committee's review. ACEPPRB members may not be appointed to serve more than two consecutive terms.

What is the Program Review/Approval Process?

The ACEPPRB will meet three (3) times per year to review program proposals and make recommendations to the WVBE regarding proposed program approval status. Once program proposals are submitted electronically to the WVDE, the eight (8) ACEPPRB members will utilize a rubric aligned with program requirements established in W.Va. Code §18A-3-1 and WVBE Policy 5901 to determine whether or not program proposals meet the established criteria. The ACEPPRB review process will result in one of the following:

- » *Initial Approval Status:* The ACEPPRB finds that the proposal **meets** criteria established in W.Va. Code §18A-3-1 and WVBE Policy 5901 and recommends approval be granted by the WVBE for a period of up to five years.
- » *Denial:* The ACEPPRB finds that the proposal **does not meet** the requirements of WVBE Policy 5901 and/or fails to provide the required documentation/complete application.

How often must a program be reviewed?

Initial Approval Status may be granted by the WVBE for a period of up to five years. The alternative certification program provider will be required to document its progress and ensure the success of its graduates to promote student achievement in the public schools in West Virginia. During the initial approval status, the alternative certification program provider may make recommendations for licensure of those who successfully complete its program.

Following a review and recommendation by the ACEPPRB, the WVBE may grant Continuing Approval Status to those alternative certification program providers who have documented success with its program completers. Success is measured in the retention of the number of program completers and their impact on student achievement as documented through the West Virginia Educator's Evaluation System. For an approved program to remain on the Continuing Approval Status, a program review will take place on a 7-year cycle.

Following a review and recommendation by the ACEPPRB, the WVBE may assign Probationary Approval Status to alternative certification program providers that fail to document adequate progress and/or success with program participants and completers.

Who is eligible to be a candidate for an alternative certification process?

Alternative certification is only available to eligible candidates who have been formally offered employment in a critical need and shortage area in a WV public school. The district may only offer employment to a non-certified teacher for a position that has been posted at least twice (for a minimal ten day period) and for which no fully certified applicant has applied.

In order for a candidate to receive an alternative certificate and participate in an approved alternative certification program, he or she must meet the following eligibility guidelines: 1. General requirements (at least 18 years of age, a US citizen, of good moral character, and physically, mentally and emotionally qualified to perform the duties of a teacher); 2. Receive criminal history record check clearance from the WVDE; 3. Hold at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education; 4. Have relevant academic (possess an academic major) or occupational qualifications that reasonably indicate he or she will be competent to pass the subject matter tests and fill the teaching position; 5. Have passed the same basic skills and subject matter test or tests required by the WVBE for traditional program candidates to become certified in the content area for which he or she is seeking licensure (and for which there is a documented shortage).

Testing requirements:

- » General Education - Prior to being hired at the district level as an alternative program participant, program candidates in a general education teaching path of a WVBE-approved alternative certification program must submit to the WVDE and the alternative program provider passing scores on pre-professional skills test or tests or evidence of a qualifying exemption as described in Policy 5202, and passing scores on the subject matter test or tests required by the WVBE. At the conclusion of the WVBE-approved alternative certification program for the education of teachers, teachers in the general education teaching path shall be required to meet the proficiency score (s) on the appropriate state competency exam(s) in pedagogy.
- » Special Education - Prior to being hired at the district level as an alternative program participant, program candidates in the special education teaching path of a WVBE-approved program for alternative certification to prepare highly qualified special education teachers must submit to WVDE and to the alternative program provider passing scores on WVBE-approved pre-professional skills test or tests, or evidence of a qualifying exemption as described in Policy 5202. At the conclusion of the alternative certification program, teachers in the special education teaching path completing a WVBE-approved alternative certification program to prepare highly qualified special education teachers shall be required to meet the proficiency score(s) on the appropriate state competency exam(s) in special education content and the state competency exam(s) in pedagogy.
- » American Sign Language - If a person seeks certification to teach American Sign Language, in addition to other eligibility requirements as described in this Policy, he/she shall pass one or more appropriate WVBE-approved tests demonstrating his/her proficiency in American Sign Language.
- » Selected Vocational and Technical Areas - If a person seeks certification to teach in selected vocational and technical areas, eligibility may not require a minimum of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. However, the candidate must pass one or more appropriate WVBE-approved tests demonstrating his/her proficiency in the basic skills and occupational content areas as identified in Appendix C of Policy 5202.

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Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools