



Commissioner's Memo
3/21/2018

Special Education Training for ALP Teachers and Long Term Substitutes with Special Education Teaching Assignments

Memo Information

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Memo Date 3/22/2018

Memo Type Regulatory

Unit Learning Services

Regulatory Authority 34 CFR §200.56(a)(2)(ii)

Response Required NO

Attention Federal Programs; Superintendents; Principals; General Business Manager; Teachers; Curriculum Coordinator; School Counselor

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Memo Reference

Memo Text

As part of the annual application for Title VI-B Funds, the State must assure that policies and procedures are in place that meet the personnel qualification requirements in IDEA section 612(a)(14), as amended by the ESSA and 34 CFR §300.156, as amended², including the requirement that a person employed as a special education teacher in elementary school, middle school, or secondary school: (1) has obtained full State certification as a special education teacher (including participating in an alternate route to certification as a special educator, if such alternate route meets minimum requirements described in 34 CFR §200.56(a)(2)(ii), as such section was in effect on November 28, 2008); or passed the State special education teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher, 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; (2) has not had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and (3) holds at least a bachelor's degree.

These requirements allow for alternate routes to certification, however; the current Additional Licensure Plan (ALP) for special education may not fully meet the intent of the requirements relative to an alternative route as defined in [34 CFR §200.56\(a\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#). Specifically, teachers on ALPs for special education are not required to participate in professional development **before** teaching (see 34 CFR §200.56(a)(2)(ii)(A)(1) below).

(2) A teacher meets the requirement in paragraph (a)(1) of this section if the teacher -

(i) Has fulfilled the State's certification and licensure requirements applicable to the years of experience the teacher possesses; or (ii) Is participating in an alternative route to certification program under which -

(A) The Teacher

(1) Receives high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and

lasting impact on classroom instruction, **before** and while teaching;

Upon further review of this issue, it has been determined that the concern with lack of adequate preparation extends beyond teachers on ALPs for special education; there are no existing requirements regarding professional development for Long Terms Substitutes (LTS) with special education teaching assignments prior to entering the classroom.

To ensure qualified educators are providing special education services to students in situations that necessitate waiver requests for LTS and/or ALPs, the Arkansas Department of Education is revising the approval process for LTS and ALP requests for special education teaching assignments beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

Training:

Any ALP teacher or LTS employed to teach special education who does not hold a valid license to teach special education shall be required to complete the six one-hour training modules listed below through ArkansasIDEAS within seven (7) days of employment. It is recommended that Districts have all current LTS complete the training, and contact the subcontracting companies to do the same.

- SPC17008 – Foundations in Special Education: Major Components of IDEA
- SPC17009 – Foundations in Special Education: Legal and Ethical Issues
- SPC17010 – Foundations in Special Education: Roles and Responsibilities
- SPC17011 – Introduction to Behavior: Supporting Effective Behavior

- SPC17012 – Introduction to Behavior: General Classroom Management Systems
- SPC17013 – Introduction to Behavior: Behavior Intervention Plans

These six one-hour modules are available at no cost to all certified teachers, administrators, and educational staff. There are two options available to non-licensed district employees for accessing these modules on ArkansasIDEAS.

- Having an AELS (Arkansas Educator Licensure System) number
 - AELS accounts are created upon clearance of background checks
- Forwarding an email from their administrator that provides a brief rationale for the need of an account along with the individual's full name, date of birth, phone number, job title, school district, and campus to the Help Desk at ideas@aetn.org
 - Once the ArkansasIDEAS account is created, a confirmation email will be sent to the address used to create the account. The link within that email must be used to complete the process.

The required training must be completed within seven (7) days of beginning an ALP or LTS position. The LTS or ALP request will not be approved until the training has been completed. It is recommended that school districts allow LTS and ALP educators to complete the training modules during the working day prior to beginning the teaching assignment.

As an alternative to the ArkansasIDEAS modules, the LTS may complete the SPED 101 Academy, which is a three credit hour course offered at some Institutions of Higher Education. Individuals who are planning to pursue an ALP in special education are encouraged to complete the SPED 101 Academy prior to the school district submitting a request for an ALP.

ALP and LTS Forms:

- ALP - The updated ALP forms will be available on the [ADE's Additional Licensure Plans Webpage](#) after June 1, 2018. Verification of completed training will be required for submission with the ALP licensure exception request.
- LTS - The updated LTS waiver request form will be available on [ADE's Licensure Exception Webpage](#) after June 1, 2018. Verification of completed training will be required for submission with the LTS licensure exception request. After the initial training modules have been completed, the district must ensure annual training is completed for any LTS with a special education teaching assignment.

Mentoring:

School districts will be required to assign a mentor to provide guidance and support to the **LTS** in order to ensure that the needs of all students are met. It is recommended that the district allow the **LTS** to shadow a special education teacher, when possible, prior to beginning the LTS assignment.

- Existing resources/guidance documents developed to support new special education teachers could be used to discuss the topics and tasks the LTS will likely encounter.
- The ADE will be developing additional guidance documents to support districts in this process.

Districts are encouraged to include ALP special educators and LTS with special education assignments in the special education mentoring activities available through all educational cooperatives.

Supervision:

The district must assign the special education supervisor, principal or other appropriate personnel to supervise the **LTS**, including providing support and resources, as well as evaluating progress.

Contact Information:

For questions/concerns regarding the LTS or ALP application process, please contact David.Baca@arkansas.gov or Melissa.Jacks@arkansas.gov or call 501-682-4342.

For questions/concerns regarding the professional development or mentoring requirements, please contact Lisa.Tyler@arkansas.gov at 501-682-4221.

Attachments

No attachments available