CONCISE EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, Section § 42-35-2.6 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, following is a concise explanatory statement:

AGENCY: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DIVISION: Teaching and Learning

RULE IDENTIFIER: *200-RICR-20-20-1*

RULE TITLE: Regulations Governing the Certification of Educators in Rhode Island

REASON FOR RULEMAKING: The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has undertaken the revision of regulation 200-RICR-20-20-1 governing the certification of educators in Rhode Island to ensure these regulations are updated to conform to best practices, support the MLL regulations, respond to the needs of the field by providing flexibilities and expand pathways in efforts to attract, recruit, hire and retain educators in RI.

ANY FINDING REQUIRED BY LAW AS A PREREQUISITE TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RULE: *(if any)*

TESTIMONY AND COMMENTS: See attached public feedback.

CHANGE TO TEXT OF THE RULE: Please see attached summary of public feedback and RIDE's rationale for changes.

REGULATORY ANALYSIS: Provide the text of the regulatory analysis prepared under § 42-35-2.9.

Expanding Pathways

International Teacher Certificate	
Definition	This new certificate type will be for out-of-country educators seeking temporary employment as full-time teachers of record in Rhode Island PK-12 public schools and will be content-specific. This certificate will be valid for one year with up to two renewals, totaling three years.
Scope	Currently, out-of-country educators are placed on a "best fit" certificate. This new certificate will be specific to content areas.
Stakeholders	Local Education Agencies Out-of-Country Educators
Benefits	LEAs can hire out-of-country educators on a temporary basis to fill open teaching positions. This opens a new pool of qualified educators to fill open positions, particularly in shortage areas.
Costs	There is a certification fee of $100 for the educator.
Transfer	This will be a transfer.
Alternatives	We considered making this a free certificate but decided that because the educators are working and being compensated as full-time employees, it should be paid. This aligns to other states although the actual cost for certificates may vary.

Registered Apprenticeship Certificate	
Definition	This certificate is specific to individuals enrolled in a Rhode Island-approved registered apprenticeship program and allows them to work as a teacher-of-record while in the program.
Scope	Teacher registered apprenticeships are new to the State of Rhode Island, so we do not currently have an appropriate certificate on which they should work as teachers-of-record. This certificate will serve as a preliminary that allows them to work while in a registered apprenticeship program.
Stakeholders	Local Education Agencies Educator Preparation Programs The State of Rhode Island Teacher Apprentices Students
Benefits	This opens a new pathway for people to become teachers while working and being compensated. This will be particularly good for individuals who already work in schools and want to become teachers. Students also benefit from these individuals who they already know working to become teachers because they have experience in the district and schools and often have relationships with students. Schools will be able to “grow their own” people to hire as full-time teachers.
Costs	There is a certification fee of $100 for the educator.
Transfer	This will be a transfer.

Alternatives	We considered making this a free certificate but decided that because the educators are working and being compensated as full-time employees, it should be paid.

Health/Physical Education/Adaptive PE Certificate	
Definition	This new certificate combines health, physical education, and adaptive physical education into one certificate. Facing critical educator shortages, combining these certificates in one is an incentive for educators to teach in Rhode Island.
Scope	There are two Rhode Island educator preparation providers that have programs leading to certification in health, physical education, and adaptive physical education. Both programs combine health and physical education; candidates who complete Rhode Island College's (RIC) program also earn adaptive physical education and candidates at the University of Rhode Island (URI) can add it. Currently, 989 educators in Rhode Island hold both health and physical education certificates. Renewing an additional certificate (beyond one) costs the individual an extra $100 for each certificate area.
Stakeholders	Health/Physical Education Teachers Health/Physical Education Teacher Candidates State of Rhode Island Educator Preparation Programs
Benefits	Educators benefit because they will save up to $200 every five years when they renew their certificates. Over a 30-year career, this could save them about $1200.

Current (Professional Certificate)			
Issuance/ Renewal	Health	Physical Education (PE)	Adaptive Physical Education (APE)
8/1/2024	$100	$50	$50
7/31/2029	$200	$100	$100
7/31/2034	$200	$100	$100
7/31/2039	$200	$100	$100
7/31/2044	$200	$100	$100
7/31/2049	$200	$100	$100
Total	$1200	$550	$550
	$2300		

Proposed (Professional Certificate)	
Issuance/Renewal	Health/PE/APE
8/1/2024	$100
7/31/2029	$200
7/31/2034	$200
7/31/2039	$200
7/31/2044	$200
7/31/2049	$200

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<tr><td>Total</td><td>$1100</td></tr>
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<tr><td>Costs</td><td>The savings to educators impact the amount the Rhode Island Department of Education collects from educators when they renew certificates. The proceeds from certificate costs are allocated to the Rhode Island General Fund, which will see less revenue based on this change.

From 2020-2023, RIC and URI produced 58 completers in their Health and Physical Education programs who were certified in Rhode Island. Using this as an average, over approximately 10 years, Rhode Island would receive $52,200 less in certification fees due to this combined certificate.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>Initial</td><td>Professional</td><td>Professional</td></tr>
<tr><td>2025-2028</td><td>58 x $100 = $5,800</td><td>2028-2031

58 x $200 = $11,600</td><td>2033-2036

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<tr><td>Total</td><td colspan="3">$52,200</td></tr>
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<tr><td>Transfer</td><td>This will be a transfer.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Alternatives</td><td>At first, we intended for this to combine only Health and Physical Education but decided that because many districts also want educators to</td></tr>
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	have Adaptive Physical Education, we would include that as well. Decreasing teacher costs benefits students by increasing the number of teachers getting certified in these areas.

Adding Certificates for Experienced Educators	
Definition	Educators with three years of experience will be able to add certificate areas by passing the appropriate test.
Scope	Current certification regulations require an educator to have a major or equivalent in an area, in addition to passing the appropriate test, to add a certification. As the test is a measure of content knowledge, passing it demonstrates that a teacher has sufficient content knowledge for certification, and this is limited only to teachers who have three years of experience because research indicates that is the transition point at which a teacher is no longer considered a novice.
Stakeholders	Educators LEAs Educator preparation programs
Benefits	Currently, educators who wish to add a certificate area must hold a major or equivalent in the content, so many current teachers may need to take additional courses. A single 3-credit course at Rhode Island College costs $1302 for an in-state resident. Individuals may need 3-8 classes (9-24 credits) depending on what they've already taken. These savings may encourage educators, who otherwise would not consider adding an additional certification area due to cost and time, to do so, which in turn could help LEAs fill open positions.

	This change will make it easier for experienced teachers to move into areas where there are teacher shortages. This benefits LEAs and students who are better off having an experienced teacher rather than someone potentially on a preliminary certificate because the LEA could not find an experienced teacher for the content area.
Costs	Because these are already experienced educators, a demonstration of their content knowledge in the new certificate area is sufficient. Tests are designed to be comprehensive, so RIDE feels confident that passing this test demonstrates content knowledge and there will be no cost to the quality of education students receive.
Alternatives	An alternative already existed which forced educators to work towards an additional program or take many classes which was a deterrent for educators. Decreasing teacher costs also benefits students by increasing the number of teachers getting certified in additional like grade span areas.

Expanding Reciprocity	
Definition	Rhode Island would expand the state with whom we offer interstate flexibility agreements to Alabama, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.
Scope	Since expanding interstate flexibility agreements, Rhode Island has seen a steep increase in people becoming certified through reciprocity. Expanding flexibilities to additional states could lead to additional increases in certification in Rhode Island.

Stakeholders	Teachers certified in Alabama, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin RI LEAs
Benefits	Offering flexibility with additional states could increase the number of people applying for Rhode Island certification through reciprocity. This could lead to an increase in revenue for Rhode Island as well as an increase in the number of qualified applicants available to LEAs.
Costs	There are no costs to the state associated with this regulation.
Alternatives	There was consideration regarding expanding interstate flexibility with additional states, but we decided to limit the expansion to those states which have similar requirements and teaching standards similar to RI's.

Integrated Content Multilingual Learner Extension	
Definition	This certificate will demonstrate a content teacher's proficiency in teaching Multilingual Learners (MLLs) within their classes.
Scope	Some LEAs with large numbers of MLLs now require teachers to obtain ESOL certification in addition to their content area. This certificate could be an alternative to teachers needing to add full ESOL certification.
Stakeholders	Teachers, LEAs, students, families
Benefits	Strong teacher preparation regarding Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is important for the state's Multilingual Learners. These students benefit greatly from having teachers who understand and are prepared to teach to their needs.

	Teachers also benefit from an extension certificate that demonstrates their proficiency in TESOL within their content area because, in some cases, it may mean they do not need to pursue an entire TESOL certification, which takes time and costs them money.
Costs	This is a transfer.
Alternatives	Educators would need to complete a full TESOL program. Decreasing teacher costs also benefits students by increasing the number of teachers getting certified in this area.

District-Level Administrator – Multilingual Learners	
Definition	The proposed MLL regulations (SITE) will require some LEAs to have someone working under this certificate.
Scope	An additional pathway to serve as an MLL director.
Stakeholders	LEAs, students, families
Benefits	Districts with large populations of MLLs will benefit from having an experienced administrator dedicated to overseeing processes and instruction related to MLLs. This benefits teachers, students, and families.
Costs	This is a transfer.
Alternatives	The alternative was that there would not be a certificate dedicated to this role which includes responsibilities of oversite of budget, supervision of educators and other administrative responsibilities.

Fast-Track Principal	
Definition	This combines the Fast-Track Expert Residency Preliminary Certificate and the PK-12 Building Level Administrator Fast-Track Certificate into one.
Scope	The field has reported that the current regulations are confusing.
Stakeholders	Educators and LEAs
Benefits	The process for obtaining this single certificate and the requirements for progression to an initial building-level administrator certificate will be clear and easy to understand. Additionally, there will no longer be two different certificates to pay for prior to applying for an initial administrator certificate.
Costs	This is a transfer.
Alternatives	RIDE considered revising language for the current Fast-Track Expert Residency Preliminary Certificate and the PK-12 Building Level Administrator Fast-Track Certificate, but after closely reading the legislation, decided that it could be written as a single certificate which makes it a more cohesive, streamlined process.

Flexibilities

Certificate Grade Span Changes	
Definition	Grade spans in Rhode Island would be: PK-3 K-6 (general) K-8 (special ed) 6-12

Scope	These grade span changes expand our current certificate grade bands by an additional grade. This will allow more flexibility within a district for staffing purposes, which could allow districts to place a certified teacher in front of students, rather than potentially hiring someone and applying for an emergency certificate.
Stakeholders	Educators LEAs Students State of Rhode Island
Benefits	Educators who formerly held two certificates to teach a particular grade – for instance – elementary educators who wanted to teach kindergarten, or secondary educators who taught 6th grade – will now only need one certificate, saving them $50 for the initial and $100 for each renewal. Currently the process to add a Kindergarten to an elementary educator's license would require them to complete a full program in early childhood, take the assessment and pay for licensure. The same holds true for secondary educators seeking to add grade 6 as this would be an additional certificate for middle grades. The benefit to an educator adding K to the grade span for elementary and for a secondary certified educator adding grade six is the savings in paying additional course work, test, and license fee.
Costs	There is no cost to the state.

Alternatives	The only alternative would be to keep the previous certificate grade spans which made educators certified in grades 7-12 complete a middle grades program. RI state approved programs' curriculum is not geared to the lower elementary grades.

Reinstatement of Expired Certificates	
Definition	Reinstatement requirements would be: **Years Since Certificate Lapsed** / **Requirement** Less than 3 — Educator pays reinstatement fee 3-10 — Educator pays reinstatement fee and must pass the current required test More than 10 — If an educator can show out-of-state employment for 3 out of the most recent 5 years, they must pay the reinstatement fee and pass the current required test
Scope	Currently, educators can reinstate their certificate within the same year that it expired. This allows more flexibility for educators who have an expired Rhode Island teaching certificate and/or have been teaching out-of-state.
Stakeholders	Educators whose RI certificate has lapsed Local Education Agencies Students

Benefits	Educators who have let their certificate lapse will benefit from this because they will be able to reinstate their certificate more easily. This also benefits school districts who are having difficulties finding qualified teachers and students because they can have more qualified teachers in their classrooms.
Costs	There are no costs associated with this regulation.
Alternatives	RIDE considered various lengths of expiration and requirements. Based on research, reinstatement times varied between 1 – 5 years with varied requirements. RI decided on a middle ground length of expiration and requirements.

Expert Residency Changes	
Definition	Expert Residency certificates will be valid for four years with one renewal of three years.
Scope	Currently, Expert Residency certificates are valid for one year with the option for three renewals. This will provide an educator more time to meet the renewal requirements.
Stakeholders	Educators who are not eligible for full certification but hold a bachelor's degree and successful completion of a content test. LEAs seeking to fill positions.

Benefits	Educators have more time to complete renewal requirements for their certification. This lessens the chance that an educator working on this certificate would not meet renewal deadline requirements and not be recertified. LEAs benefit from being able to keep the same educators in positions with students, who also benefit from having a teacher who knows the curriculum, school culture, and student body.
Costs	This is a transfer.
Alternatives	Alternatives were to keep the current certificate renewal each year or make the first renewal period longer than four years which would make it difficult to ensure the educators were working towards requirements.

Emergency Certification	
Definition	Local Education Agencies (LEAs) can request an emergency certificate for an individual after having posted a position for 14 days.
Scope	To request an emergency certificate, an LEA must have posted a position for a minimum of 30 years. This regulation changes that to 14 days.
Stakeholders	LEAs Students
Benefits	This will benefit the LEA because they can hire someone for an open position quicker and students can have consistency with a teacher rather than potentially having day-to-day substitutes.

Costs	There are no costs associated with this regulation.
Alternatives	The alternative would be to keep the posting requirement that currently exists or reduce it to less than 14 days, which would not allow much time to publicize and gain applicants.

Praxis Test Pilot	
Definition	The Praxis Test Pilot will allow an individual who scores within one Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) and meets other requirements, like 3.5 GPA in the content area, to apply for this flexibility to obtain certification.
Scope	Currently, many educators believe Praxis to be a barrier to certification. This pilot aims to decrease that barrier while still maintaining the rigor needed to ensure teachers are prepared for the content they will teach.
Stakeholders	Teacher candidates Local Education Agencies Students
Alternatives	RIDE considered accepting scores within 2 SEM from candidates because some other states do this.
Benefits	Each Praxis test costs approximately $150. So each time an educator fails and needs to retake the test, they pay. Some educators take the Praxis 3 or more times before passing and are only off by a few points. This pilot could save them the costs of additional tests, plus the stress and burden of retaking them.

Costs	There are no costs to the state associated with this regulation.
Alternatives	The alternative would be to keep the requirement as is and have educators take the test additional times at additional costs. RIDE considered accepting scores within 2 SEM from candidates because some other states do this.

Additional Pathways to Earn Advanced Certificate	
Definition	This expands the list of aspirational benchmarks an educator can meet in order to get an advanced certificate.
Scope	These aspirational benchmarks are available to any educator on a professional certificate. Meeting an aspirational benchmark during a renewal cycle makes an educator eligible for an advanced certificate, which has a seven-, rather than 5-year, duration.
Stakeholders	Educators State of Rhode Island Educator Preparation Programs
Benefits	Educators have more options to earn an advanced certificate, granting them seven years of licensure, rather than five. This affords them an extra two years before they need to renew their certificate again, which costs them $200.
Costs	This is a transfer.
Alternatives	The alternative would be to keep the requirement as is and have fewer educators eligible to receive an extra two years added to their certificates at no cost.

Minimum Admissions for Alternate Route Certification Programs	
Definition	The minimum GPA requirement for admission to alternative route programs will be removed from the regulations.
Scope	Rather than stating what the minimum GPA is, the regulations will say a minimum GPA is required and it shall be determined by RIDE. This allows RIDE the ability to change the GPA requirement to align with that required of other programs.
Stakeholders	Alternative route program providers Teacher candidates LEAs
Benefits	By changing the minimum admissions requirements, alternative route programs may have a larger applicant pool and more potential educators can complete a program that best fits their needs. A greater applicant pool and potentially greater numbers in alternative route candidates could benefit LEAs, as these candidates work as teachers-of-record during the program.
Costs	There are no costs to the state associated with this regulation.
Alternatives	The alternative would be to keep the requirement as is and have a discrepancy between RI approved preparation programs as well as an inequity for candidates choosing to complete an alternate route program

Pedagogy Test Removal

Definition	This removes the requirement to take a pedagogy test in addition to content tests for eligibility for certification.
Scope	This affects each educator applying for certification in Rhode Island.
Stakeholders	Teachers
Benefits	Aspiring educators must no longer take the Praxis exam that tests pedagogy, saving them the stress and cost of an additional test. The test cost $156, which was paid directly to ETS.
Costs	There are no costs associated with this regulatory change.
Alternatives	There are no alternatives to this regulation as it was approved in the previously promulgated regulation changes but had not been removed from the regulations. The reason for the change was to align with most US states as they no longer require pedagogy tests.