



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

To: School Administrators, Special Education Administrators, Special Education Emergency Permit Holders, Educator Preparation Program Personnel and Human Resource Officers

From: Risa Regnier, Director of Educator Licensing
Nancy Holsapple, Director of Special Education

Date: June 18, 2021

Subject: Emergency Permits for Special Education

As you know, Indiana has issued emergency permits to address teacher shortages (formerly called limited licenses) since the 1960s. However, in 2015, the federal law that governs elementary and secondary education, called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to prohibit the issuance of emergency permits in special education. Other emergency permit areas, beyond special education, are not impacted by this change in federal law.

Per federal law, a person employed as a special education teacher in elementary school, middle school, or secondary school must: 1) have obtained full certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification), or passed the State special education teacher licensing examination and hold a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher, **2) not have the special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis**; and 3) hold at least a bachelor's degree. (Indiana law requires completion of an approved program of coursework and passing required testing for full special education licensure.)

A teacher will meet these federal requirements if they are participating in an alternative route to special education licensure program under which they:

1. Receive 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);
2. Participate in a program of intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers or a teacher mentoring program;
3. Assume functions as a teacher only for a specified period of time not to exceed three years; and
4. Demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full licensure as prescribed by the state.



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In the 2019-2020 school year, Indiana had more than 80,000 licensed educators. Of those, 1,218 emergency permits in special education were utilized by 261 school employers in the following categories:

- Mild Intervention: 1020 (568 original permits, 450 renewals, 2 additions);
- Intense Intervention: 158 (73 originals, 79 renewals);
- Blind and Low Vision: 20 (12-originals, 8 renewals); and
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 20 (11 originals, 9 renewals).

To bring special education licensure into compliance with the IDEA regulations, IDOE has consulted with multiple education and special education stakeholders and proposes the following steps at this time.

1. Due to federal law, cease issuing emergency permits in special education areas after the 2021-2022 school year.
2. For the 2022 school year and thereafter, the Office of Educator Licensing and Office of Special Education will develop and issue a “Special Permit” for special education teachers participating in alternative route special education licensure programs. This “Special Permit” will include standards that address the licensing requirements outlined in federal law, providing an opportunity for compliance through alternative special education licensure programs.
3. IDOE will partner with teacher preparation institutions to offer a grant program to defray tuition costs of students accepted into participating special education preparation programs that will lead to permit holders achieving full licensure within three (3) years of permit issuance.
4. IDOE will work with entities providing alternative Transition to Teaching licensure programs in special education to ensure those programs comply with the IDEA provisions.

PLEASE NOTE: additional solutions are actively being considered.

IDOE will continue to share additional guidance and information, including FAQs, with educators via multiple communication methods in the coming weeks and months. We encourage you to share solution ideas with our team as we work to achieve compliance. Please email your comments or questions to licensinghelp@doe.in.gov or specialeducation@doe.in.gov and include “EP/T2T Alternative Routes to Teaching” in the subject of your email.