

Application and Approval Procedures for Extension of the P-3 Certification Deadline

Should the New Jersey Supreme Court offer relief of the requirement that all teachers in Abbott preschool classrooms must have an undergraduate degree and certification by September, 2004, the following procedures would be implemented.

1. The Department of Education will immediately notify all relevant parties of the decision, reiterate the procedures to be followed, along with each institution's or individual's responsibilities. Relevant parties include:
 - Abbott districts,
 - Contracted child care providers,
 - Head Start agencies,
 - Individual teachers who may be eligible for an extension (i.e. those that do not have undergraduate degrees), and
 - Institutions of higher education.
2. DOE staff will meet with districts and child care center directors to ensure that all potentially eligible teachers received the letter and understand how to proceed, and that all relevant parties understand their roles and responsibilities in the extension process.
3. Districts will designate one person to act as a district representative to oversee this process and develop a database to track all applications.
4. Individual teachers will contact their advisors or other officials at the college or university at which they are enrolled to develop a detailed and feasible plan for completion of the degree and have the appropriate Verification of Progress toward Graduation form completed (see attached). Teachers will request letters of support from their center director and district representative. The verification form, with plan and letters of support attached, will be given to the district representative by each teacher by **July 1, 2004**.
5. Teachers who might be eligible for an extension, should the court grant it, fall into the following two categories:
 - A teacher hired prior to September 2000 who requires 30 credits or less to complete the degree. This teacher must also be a student in good standing, maintain the appropriate minimum GPA of 2.75 when 4.0 equals an A grade, and must have a detailed and feasible plan for completion of the degree by September 2006.
 - A teacher who works for a Head Start agency that began contracting with an Abbott district for that classroom after September 2000 and who can verify s/he will complete the degree within four years of the first date of contract for the classroom in which s/he has continuously taught. All currently employed Head Start teachers whose classrooms come under contract for Abbott preschool will be eligible for this four-year time frame for completion of the degree. This teacher must also be a student in good standing, maintain the appropriate minimum GPA of 2.75 when 4.0 equals an A grade, and must have a detailed and feasible plan for completion of the degree.

6. The district representative, center directors, and DOE staff will provide assistance to teachers during the entire process of applying for an extension.
7. The district will review each application for accuracy and completeness and then forward each teacher's materials to the DOE on or before **July 16** of the applicable year.
8. The DOE will determine eligibility and provide letters of approval or denial for each individual applicant. These letters will be completed by **August 2** of the applicable year for every complete and correct application, and sent to districts, center directors and individual teachers.
9. Extensions will be granted on a yearly basis with a new verification form due in May of each applicable year. Individual teachers, districts, and center and agency directors are responsible for ensuring that candidates are making adequate progress. The DOE will determine eligibility for a second year's extension and provide letters of approval or denial for each individual applicant. These letters will be completed by June 2005 for every complete and correct application, and sent to districts, center directors and individual teachers.

Responsibilities of Relevant Parties

1. Teacher:
 - a. Contact advisor or other official at the college or university in which enrolled to develop a detailed and feasible plan for completion of degree;
 - b. Complete the Verification of Progress Towards Graduation form, and have it signed by an advisor or other college/university representative;
 - c. Submit one copy of the verification form to the district and one to the appropriate child care center or agency;
 - d. Obtain a letter of support from the school district;
 - e. Obtain a letter of support from the appropriate center/agency director; and
 - f. Submit all forms and letters to the district on or before **July 1, 2004**.
2. Abbott district:
 - a. Designate one person to oversee the teacher extension process;
 - b. Develop a database to track all applications;
 - c. Provide assistance to eligible teachers throughout the entire process of applying for an extension;
 - d. Review each application for accuracy and completeness and forward all material to the Department of Education on or before **July 16th** of the applicable year.
3. Child care providers/centers:
 - a. Ensure that all potentially eligible teachers have received information on the extension process; and
 - b. Provide a letter of support for any teacher eligible for an extension.
4. Institutions of higher education:
 - a. Work with all eligible teachers to develop a detailed, feasible plan for completion of the degree; and

- b. Complete the Verification of Progress toward Graduation form for all eligible teachers.
5. Department of Education:
- a. Notify all relevant parties when the court makes a decision.
 - b. Meet with all districts and center directors to ensure that any eligible teachers have received the proper information regarding the extension process, and make sure that all relevant parties understand their responsibilities in the extension process.
 - c. Provide technical assistance to districts, centers, and teachers throughout the extension process.
 - d. Determine eligibility of individual teachers based on the information they submit through the district, and notify all teachers of their eligibility status on or before **August 2** of the applicable year.
 - e. Determine eligibility of second year's extension, based on teacher application and send letters of approval or denial by June 2005.
 - f. Provide statistical information on the number and provider-type of teachers granted the extension in or before October of each applicable year.