




MEMORANDUM

TO: Educator Preparation Providers and Student Teachers

FROM: Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner 

DATE: April 28, 2020

SUBJECT: Temporary Suspension of Student Teaching Requirements and Issuing of Emergency Certification

Pursuant to the Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency issued by Governor Mike Dunleavy on March 11, 2020, and Alaska Statutes 26.23.020(g)(1) and (7), the Governor, under Order of Suspension No. 2, has suspended statutory and regulatory requirements that have become barriers for educators to gain or maintain Alaska certification. As of April 14, the suspension included requirements for student teachers.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, public school buildings across the state of Alaska were mandated by the Governor to close and begin offering remote learning options for all students. The resulting schooling disruptions, has made it challenging, if not impossible for many candidates participating in student teaching to complete 500 hours over a period of 15 weeks of clinical practice in a P-12 setting. In order for student teachers to not be penalized by this unavoidable circumstance, the minimum number of hours required for student teaching has been temporarily suspended.

To ensure student teachers are able to continue to expand their knowledge, skills and abilities, Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) are encouraged to take the following steps:

- To the extent possible based on P-12 capacity, coordinate opportunities for student teachers/interns to participate in online teaching with cooperating teachers and P-12 students.
- If more than half of the student teaching/internship has been disrupted, develop alternate methods for determining candidate readiness for program completion. An example might be to include additional virtual seminars allowing candidates opportunities to complete peer teaching exercises assessed by faculty and one another.

With the waiving of the student teaching hours requirements, EPPs are able to recommend candidates for certification who have provided evidence of meeting all program competencies.

Because of testing center closures, some student teachers may have difficulty satisfying the testing requirements necessary for program completion and to qualify for certification. If a candidate is unable to satisfy a testing requirements, an EPP may waive this requirement and recommend the candidate for

certification. Moving forward, EPPs will need to continue to provide support or arrange for support, as needed, of their candidates to complete assessment requirements in the future.

If a candidate has not been able to satisfactorily demonstrate program competencies or meet testing requirements because of the COVID-19 emergency, the candidate may apply for an emergency certificate that will allow him/her to be hired in a certified position by a school district for the 2020-2021 school year. While holding the emergency certificate, the candidate will be expected to satisfy any unmet requirements of their preparation program and/or testing requirements.

If you have any questions relating to this memo, please contact Sondra Meredith, Teacher Education & Certification Administrator, at sondra.meredith@alaska.gov.