Extension of VSBPE Waiver - Provisional Licensure for ECSE and K-12 Special Educators

# Purpose

## In response to staffing shortages exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the AOE is supporting alternate pathways to receiving a provisional license with a special education, or early childhood special education (ECSE) endorsement. The VSBPE waiver allows districts to expand the applicant pool to include unlicensed educational professionals who have demonstrated their ability to provide high quality special education services in the classroom, but do not have the required coursework for provisional licensure. It will allow districts to fill vacant positions by supporting uncredentialed staff through to professional licensure. Districts will be expected to collaborate with the AOE to provide additional supports for these educators ensuring successful outcomes for them and the students on their caseload. While districts will have discretion to determine job responsibilities, it is anticipated that Directors of Special Education and/or licensed mentors will be primarily responsible for high skilled services such as writing IEP’s and student evaluations until mentees have completed the appropriate training and/or coursework. Districts can submit a provisional license request to the AOE using normal procedures through the Online Licensing System starting June 1, 2022.

## Summary of VSBPE Waiver

For the 2022/23 academic year, applicants for a Provisional License with a special education or ECSE endorsement shall possess a baccalaureate degree, and meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. possess any valid professional Educator license from Vermont or from another state;
2. possess any expired professional Vermont Educator license or any expired professional Educator license from another state, provided the license expired no fewer than two (2) years and no longer than ten (10) years ago;
3. have a major or the equivalent in the content area of the provisional endorsement sought;
4. have successfully completed Praxis II licensure content assessment for special education (Test number 5354) with a passing score of at least 145 within 120 days of issuance of a provisional license.
5. Educators qualifying through criterion d) must have been admitted to an approved pathway to special education licensure.
6. Educators qualifying through criterion d) must have a mentor designated by LEA with expectations that the mentor will participate in the AOE-sponsored mentoring program aimed at supporting mentors of special educators called Vermont Mentoring Special Educators of Excellence (VMSEE).
7. Educators qualifying through criterion d) must participate in the Vermont Agency of Education-identified modules for introduction to federal special education law, policies, procedures and practice within 30 days of issuance of a provisional license.

This waiver automatically expires on 30 May 2023 unless reaffirmed by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators on or before the date of expiration.

# Praxis Testing

For K-12 Special Educators: [Special Education: Core Knowledge & Applications (5354)](https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5354) - passing score of 145

For Early Childhood Special Educators: [Special Education: Early Childhood (5691)](https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5691) - Passing Score of 159

While Vermont normally does not require Praxis II testing for K-12 Special Educators and Early Childhood Special Educators, ETS does offer tests in these areas for other states. For the 2022/2023 school year, ETS has made Special Education: Core Knowledge & Applications (5354), and Special Education: Early Childhood (5691) available for test takers in Vermont. These tests are available for registration through ETS.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize ETS’s study materials, including the low-cost interactive practice tests. The interactive test will be an effective pre-assessment to develop a study plan before taking the full test within 120 days. Free practice tests for 5354 are also available through the Vermont [Department of Libraries](https://www.learningexpresshub.com/ProductEngine/LELIndex.html#/center/learningexpresslibrary/career-center/home/prepare-for-teaching-exams) for those who hold a public library card anywhere in the State of Vermont.

While not required for this waiver, educators may need to take the Praxis Core Basic Skills assessment to pursue professional licensure.

# Mentoring and Learning Modules

Educators working under a Provisional license through this waiver will need a mentor participating in the Vermont AOE’s Special Educator Mentoring Program and complete the suite of AOE-identified learning modules below.

The learning modules will serve as an orientation for applicants to special education and will supplement the classroom experience and on-site support that they will receive from their schools and districts. They will focus on the history of special education legislation, including related legislation and case law. Additionally, applicants will be oriented to research-based practices they can utilize within the classroom and as collaborators with colleagues and families.

Read: [**The History of Special Education Law in the United States**](https://www.wrightslaw.com/law/art/history.spec.ed.law.htm)

View: [What Every Educator Should Know About Special Education Law](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mP-ukH4mcVk) - 1 hour

Completion of a series of Iris Vanderbilt Online Modules.  The modules are available at no charge, address the needs of students who are ages 3-21, and are 1-2 hours in length.  Required modules will likely include all of the following:

* [**Accessing the General Education Curriculum: Inclusion Considerations for Students with Disabilities**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/agc/)
* [**Evidence-Based Practices (Part 1): Identifying and Selecting a Practice or Program**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ebp_01/)
* [**Evidence-Based Practices (Part 2): Implementing a Practice or Program with Fidelity**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ebp_02/)
* [**Evidence-Based Practices (Part 3): Evaluating Learner Outcomes and Fidelity**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ebp_03/)
* [**IEPs: Developing High-Quality Individualized Education Programs**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/iep01/)
* [**Related Services: Common Supports for Students with Disabilities**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/rs/)
* [**What Do You See? Perceptions of Disability**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/da/)
* [**Providing Instructional Supports: Facilitating Mastery of New Skills**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/sca/)
* [**Assistive Technology: An Overview**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/at/)
* [**Secondary Transition: Helping Students with Disabilities Plan for Post-High School Settings**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tran/)
* [**Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors (Part 1): Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bi1/)
* [**Addressing Disruptive and Noncompliant Behaviors (Part 2): Behavioral Interventions**](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/bi2/)

The new teacher mentoring program is currently being piloted by the AOE. This program primarily focuses on supporting district assigned mentors in their work with mentees under a provisional license.

More information about the mentoring program for SY 2022/2023 will be released in the months ahead.