



## VT-HEC SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM INFORMATION

### General Information:

2019

- Initiated work on Special Education ROPA portfolio

2020

- Special Education Program received ROPA Approval
- Began first cohort in our [ROPA approved SE Program](#)

2021

- Started offering 2 sections of each course to meet the needs of the field
- Initiated work on ROPA portfolio for SE Initial Licensure

2022

- SE Initial Licensure Program received ROPA approval
- Began first cohort in our [ROPA approved SE Initial License Program](#)
- Created and ran the [Special Educator Academy](#)

2023

- Ongoing Initial Licensure and Endorsement programs
- Ran the Special Educator Academy
- Worked with Colchester School District to create 3-year SE Initial Licensing Program for their paraeducators
- Instituted [Colchester SE Initial Licensing Program](#)

All information listed above is on-going and current.

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**Data collected from following programs (as of January 8, 2024):**

- 2020-2022:** 1 ROPA approved SE Endorsement Program
- 2021-2023:** 1 ROPA approved SE Endorsement Program
- 2022-2024:** 1 ROPA approved SE Endorsement Program  
1 SE Initial Licensing ROPA approved program
- 2023-2025:** 1 ROPA approved SE Endorsement Program  
1 SE Initial Licensing ROPA approved program  
1 three-year SE Initial Licensing ROPA approved program for a district

Cohorts not Completed Yet: 2022-2024 and 2023-2025

	2020 - 2022	2021 - 2023	2022 - 2024	2023 - 2025	TOTAL
Accepted into Cohorts	22	48	63	69	202
Never Started Program	2	8	6	5	21
Dropped Out (stress related – no support – don’t want to do this job)	4	9	5	6 2 more projected	26
Dropped Out (other)	0	0	5	2 projected	7
Dismissed (by VT-HEC)	1	0	2	1 projected	4
Failed	3	4	2	2 projected	11
<b>Completed with VT-HEC</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>43 projected</b>	<b>53 projected</b>	<b>135 projected</b>

	2020 - 2022	2021 - 2023	2022 - 2024	2023 - 2025	TOTAL
Requested Extension *	2	6	6	6 projected	20 projected
On Provisionals (by year 2)	12	27	43	32 12 more projected	126
Students in VT- HEC programs still going through Peer Review (no space in SE IL Program)	4	15	12	14	45
Permanently Licensed with AOE	9	12 14 additional projected (still waiting for Peer Review)	40 Projected	45 Projected	120 Projected

\* Due to not being able to keep pace with coursework



## On-Going Concerns:

- Stress on special educators is significantly impacting their mental health. They don't have time for life outside of school and coursework, and their families are suffering. Anecdotally, we have had students drop out or delay their coursework because they are getting sick and having emotional breakdowns, panic attacks, and even psychiatric hospitalizations.
- At the beginning of a 2-year provisional, students are asked to:
  - Start a brand-new job that is extremely complex (laws, regulations, etc.) working with the students in our schools with the most challenges, when they have **no background** in what is expected for the job
  - Start a program that will enable them to become licensed in 2 years (e.g., Our Initial Licensing program is 24 graduate credits in special education, two years of seminars in the Core Teaching Standards, and the Vermont Licensure Portfolio.)
  - Complete the Praxis II in special education and all of the IRIS modules, etc. that the AOE requires for the provisional
- Provisionals are granted based on a school year calendar. For instance, if someone is hired on a provisional in March, that entire school year is considered Year 1 of the provisional, yet the student has missed the first 3 semesters of coursework (for a program with six semesters). This means the student is being asked to complete a two-year program in 1 year, while also facing all of the other challenges listed above. This is not good teaching. If we want special educators to stay in the field, we must give them the time to complete the education they will need, in a reasonable amount of time.
- Students on provisionals are being asked to do work that is far above their level of proficiency (examples below):
  - One of our students teaching on a provisional license was put in charge of an emotional-behavioral disabilities class with no other promised support; the student had completed 1 course in emotional disabilities. When the student asked for help, they were initially told, "You were hired on a provisional, which means you can do the job of a special educator. Stop complaining, and do your job."
  - Student on provisional required to case manage the most challenging student/family in the district (with lawyers involved). When the candidate



suggested she might not be the most qualified to do this, she was given a warning (letter in her file) about not fulfilling her job duties.

- First-year student with no education background hired on provisional to develop an Intensive Needs Classroom
- First-year student on provisional case managing only students with Speech/Language Impairment
- Student given challenging child/family to case manage with another special educator who is also on a provisional and has taken no course work, etc., over the last 1.5 years. Student displays few of the skills necessary to be a special educator but will be applying through Peer Review in the spring.