

**Act 82 of 2018 Special Education Guidance**  
January 2019

**Date:** January 28, 2019

**Re:** Initial Guidance on Expanding Special Education Grade Spans

**To:** PAC-TE and Dean's Forum Officers/Board and Program Provider Deans and Chairs

On October 19, 2018, Governor Wolf signed Act 82 of 2018 which amends the Public School Code of 1949 to add a new section. Newly added Section 1202.1 pertains to Instructional Certificate Grade Spans. It is important to clarify that Act 82 of 2018 has no impact on and should not be confused with Act 82 of 2012, which is primarily known for teacher effectiveness evaluation provisions.

Section 1202.1 of Act 82 of 2018 creates a Special Education PK-12 certificate, effective January 1, 2022. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has developed the following guidance for undergraduate and post-baccalaureate candidates in teacher preparation programs and PDE-certified teachers seeking initial or additional Special Education PK-8 and/or Special Education 7-12 certification:

- Special Education PK-12 certificates will be offered beginning January 1, 2022. Special Education PK-8 and Special Education 7-12 certificates will continue to be offered through December 31, 2021.
- PDE will continue to require applicants for Special Education PK-8 and Special Education 7-12 certificates to obtain a content certificate in a corresponding grade span through December 31, 2021.
- Effective December 19, 2018, for Special Education PK-8 or Special Education 7-12 certificate holders, PDE began to allow the issuance of the other special education certificates following the satisfactory completion of these requirements:
  - ✓ The candidate completes continuing education credits, which may include coursework and fieldwork to address any gaps in competencies required by PDE for the additional special education certificate; and
  - ✓ The candidate obtains the recommendation of the program provider.

Under this policy:

- ✓ The candidate is not required to take any additional special education certification tests; and
- ✓ The candidate is not required to hold an additional content-area certificate in a corresponding grade span as a prerequisite for issuance of the other special education certificate.

New Special Education PK-12 program framework guidelines will be issued by PDE.

**Please Note:** The policy items articulated above are not applicable to out-of-state applicants since section 1202.1(3) is specific to holders of Pennsylvania Special Education PK-8 or 7-12 certification.

Please contact the department's certification staff at 717-PA-TEACH (728-3324) or 717-787-3356, or send an email to [ra-edcertquestions@pa.gov](mailto:ra-edcertquestions@pa.gov), with questions.