

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 5416
(Third Reprint)

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 5416 (Third Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

This bill would require the State Board of Education to authorize an alternate route to expedite the teacher certification of persons who are employed or have been employed by a school district as a paraprofessional or an instructional assistant. Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education is to develop recommendations for the alternate route program after consulting with representatives of the education community. The bill further specifies certain minimum criteria for the alternate route program, including, but not limited to, a formula for applying a candidate's direct classroom service to any student teaching requirements.

I commend the bill's sponsors for recognizing the great potential in recruiting paraprofessionals and instructional assistants to the teaching profession. They serve critical roles in our schools and make positive impacts on the lives of our students, and many of them consider becoming a certified teacher as the next step in their career. I am concerned, however, that this bill may be counterproductive in achieving the bill's intended objective which is to encourage and make it simpler for these individuals to obtain a teaching certificate. The Department of Education currently provides an expedited certification review process for paraprofessionals and instructional assistants. Creating an alternate route as contemplated under this bill may cause significant confusion to prospective candidates in the application process.

Instead, efforts should focus on addressing obstacles facing education support professionals when seeking teaching certification, including by providing supports towards degree attainment. My recommendations will change the creation of an alternate route for paraprofessionals and instructional assistants into the creation of a paraprofessional educator pathway, which would apply to paraprofessionals and instructional assistants pursuing a Certificate of Eligibility with Advance Standing ("CEAS") in a specific endorsement area. The pathway will include counting a candidate's direct classroom service that meets the clinical practice requirements for the CEAS as credit towards the clinical practice requirements found in N.J.A.C. 6A:9A et seq. Furthermore, the pathway will include a requirement that the school district in which the candidate is currently authorized to work make every reasonable effort to place the candidate in a classroom setting in the endorsement area the paraprofessional is seeking. Finally, my recommendations will allow educator preparation programs to be approved as preparation programs specifically for the paraprofessional educator pathway.

Therefore, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 5416 (Third Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 7-8:</u>	Delete "an alternate route" and insert "a paraprofessional educator pathway"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 9:</u>	Delete "or have been employed by" and insert "to work in"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 10:</u>	After "assistant" insert "pursuing a Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing in a specific endorsement area"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 12:</u>	Delete "alternate route program" and insert "paraprofessional educator preparation pathway"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 21:</u>	After "Jersey," insert "the New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Association of Schools and Agencies for the Handicapped (ASAH),"

<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 23:</u>	Delete "alternate route program" and insert "pathway"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 25:</u>	Delete "a formula for applying"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 25-26:</u>	Delete "to any student teaching requirements," and insert "while employed in a school district as a paraprofessional or instructional assistant, which shall meet the clinical practice requirements for the Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing in the endorsement area they are pursuing,"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 27:</u>	Delete "by" and insert "to work in"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 27:</u>	After "district" insert "as a paraprofessional or instructional assistant"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 28:</u>	After "tutoring" insert ", under the supervision of a mentor cooperating teacher who is teaching in the endorsement area being sought by the paraprofessional"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 28:</u>	Delete "the formula" and insert "these conditions"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 29:</u>	After "appropriate" insert "towards the clinical practice requirements found in N.J.A.C. 6A:9A et seq."
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 31:</u>	Delete "employed" and insert "authorized to work as a paraprofessional or instructional assistant"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 31:</u>	Delete "permit" and insert "place"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 32:</u>	Delete "to" and insert "in a classroom setting in the endorsement area the paraprofessional is seeking and with a certified educator who meets the requirements for a cooperating teacher at N.J.A.C. 6A:9A-4.4, so the paraprofessional may"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 35-36:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Line 37:</u>	Delete "certification" and insert "(3) Allow educator preparation program providers to submit for approval by the Department of Education, preparation programs specifically for the paraprofessional educator preparation pathway"

Page 2, Section 2, Line 39:

Delete "This" and insert
"Section 1.b. of this"

Page 2, Section 2, Line 39:

After "." Insert "Sections
1.a. and 1.c. shall take effect
upon the promulgation of
regulations by the State Board
of Education, pursuant to the
"Administrative Procedure
Act," P.L.1968, c.410
(C.52:14B-1 et seq.),
necessary to effectuate the
provisions of these sections."

[seal]

Respectfully,

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor