

NYS Certification: Students with Disabilities



No. 22-09 (Replaces 20-10)

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BACKGROUND

Special education certification has undergone many changes in the past 20 years. Prior to 2004, the special education certificate was considered an ‘All Grades’ certificate, or K-12. In 2004 the special education certificate was replaced by the certificate title of Students with Disabilities (SWD) and this SWD title was broken into four (4) grade level certificates:

- SWD: Birth – Grade 2
- SWD: Grades 1 – 6
- SWD: Grades 5 – 9
- SWD: Grades 7-12: Content Area.

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The SWD Grades 5-9 certificate was further delineated into a generalist title (for non-departmentalized assignments) or a content-specific title. The SWD Grades 7-12 certificates were separated into content area, requiring knowledge of a specific content area in addition to the knowledge base in special education.

In 2011 the SWD: Grades 5-9 and the SWD: Grades 7-12 content-specific certificate titles were eliminated and replaced with the SWD Grades 7-12 Generalist certificate, with the availability of content area extensions that could be attached to this certificate.

In 2018-19, additional changes were made to the SWD titles; state regulations were amended to allow for grade level extensions to existing SWD certificate titles.

In the fall of 2019, the State Education Department (SED) more clearly defined the appropriate credentials for special education teachers assigned to special classes: a 7-12 subject area certificate, the Statement of Continued Eligibility, the Limited Subject Area Extension, or the Subject Area Extension.

In September 2022 SED created the Students with Disabilities - All Grades certificate. This certificate is now available for interested applicants, and NY colleges that offer teacher preparation programs in special education will be transitioning to this certificate by 2030.

SED also changed the requirements for the Subject Area Extension, used to teach content in certain special classes in grades 7-12.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - ALL GRADES CERTIFICATE

The SWD - All Grades certificate covers teaching students with disabilities from PreK – Grade 12. It does not cover students with disabilities from age 0-2. Applications for this certificate can be entered on the state’s TEACH system as of September 28, 2022.

Currently certified special education teachers DO NOT have to apply for the SWD - All Grades certificate. The pre-2004 special education certificate and the grade-level SWD certificate titles remain valid. Currently certified special education teachers continue to meet the requirements of their current certificates i.e., fulfill requirements for the professional certificate and registration/CTLE requirements.

Currently certified special education teachers who wish to obtain the SWD - All Grades certificate can view the requirements at <https://eservices.nysed.gov/teach/certhelp/CertRequirementHelp.do>. Interested members should note that currently there is no CST specific to this new certificate, so the state is accepting the pre-9/24/214 Multisubject exam or current grade-level CST exams including Multi-subject: Childhood Grades 1-6; Multi-subject: Middle Childhood Grades 5-9; Multi-subject: Secondary Teachers Grades 7-12. The Birth - Grade 2 Multi-subject CST is not acceptable for the SWD - All Grades certificate.

Current Special Ed Titles	Special Ed Titles After 9/28/22
SWD, Birth – Grade 2	SWD, Birth – Grade 2
SWD, Grades 1 – 6	*SWD, Grades 1 – 6
SWD, Grades 7 – 12	*SWD, Grades 7 – 12
*SWD, Grades 5 – 9	*SWD, Grades 5 – 9
*Special Education, Permanent	*Special Education, Permanent
	SWD - All Grades

* These titles still exist, yet SED has either stopped issuing them or will stop issuing them. Note that eventually the State Education Department will only issue two certificates, the SWD Birth – Grade 2 certificate and the SWD - All Grades certificate.

Currently certified special education teachers who possess a grade-level SWD certificate can still apply for an additional grade-level SWD certificate or SWD grade-level extension.

Members who may want an additional grade-level SWD certificate have two options:

- a. Apply on TEACH using the Additional Classroom Teaching Certificate pathway prior to September 1, 2023 if they are completing courses on their own (like ELT’s SWD courses).

- b. Apply on TEACH using an Approved Teacher Prep Program pathway if completing a NYS-approved teacher education program prior to September 1, 2029 or when the college stops offering the program, whichever comes first.

GRADE-LEVEL EXTENSIONS

Grade-level extensions will continue to be available to special education teachers who hold grade-level Students with Disabilities certificates. The introduction of the Students with Disabilities – All Grades certificate does not impact the availability of these extensions.

Current Certification	Teaching Experience Requirement	Teachers Choose One of the Following Requirements:		Grade Extension to Current SWD Certificate
		Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE)	College Course	
SWD Birth - Grade 2	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 1 st and/or 2 nd grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the elementary level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the elementary education level.	Grades 3-4
SWD Grades 1 -6	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 1 st and/or 2 nd grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the early childhood level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the early childhood education level.	PK-K
	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 5 th and/or 6 th grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Grades 7-8
SWD 7-12 Generalist or Content Specialist	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 7 th and/or 8 th grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Grades 5-6
SWD 5-9 Generalist or Content Specialist	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 8 th and/or 9 th grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the adolescent education level AND 15 hours of acceptable CTLE in ELA OR 3 credits in ELA.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the adolescent education level AND 15 hours of acceptable CTLE in ELA OR 3 credits in ELA.	Grades 10-12

For each of the grade level extensions, teaching experience is defined as at least 75% or more of the applicant's time is spent teaching students with disabilities in either of the two grade levels closest to the grade level extension during each of the three school years. Applicants for the grade level extension(s) use the state's [Verification of Paid Experience form for Classroom Teachers and Pupil](#)

[Personnel Services Professionals: Professional and Permanent Certificates, Extensions, Limited Extensions, and Statements of Continued Eligibility](#) to fulfill this requirement.

New York State Teacher Centers offer state approved CTLE courses that fulfill the requirement for grade level extensions. For information on availability of these courses, visit the Teacher Center website at [NYS Teachers Centers](#).

STATEMENTS OF CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, LIMITED SUBJECT AREA EXTENSIONS AND SUBJECT AREA EXTENSION

In addition to grade level flexibility, the State Education Department also allows special education teachers with select Students with Disabilities certificates to teach special classes. The SWD titles eligible for this flexibility include: SWD 7-12 Generalist, SWD 7-12 Content Specialist, SWD 5-9 Generalist, SWD 5-9 Content Specialist, and Special Education K-12.

Effective July 1, 2021, special education teachers who teach one or more subject areas in a special class in grades 7-12, with some or no students under alternate assessment, must either:

- 1) meet the teaching experience requirement for the statement of continued eligibility (SOCE) and have an active SOCE application in TEACH in each subject area that they teach, or
- 2) be appropriately certified in each subject area that they teach, (content 7-12 certificate, Subject Area Extension, or Limited subject Area Extension).

Statement of Continued Eligibility or SOCE: The SOCE was available to special education teachers with select certificate titles and at least three years of special education teaching experience in a special class in grades 7-12. The deadline to apply for a SOCE was June 30, 2021.

Special education teachers can complete the SOCE requirements within three years of the application date or two official state evaluations of the application, whichever comes first, with the exception that the teaching experience requirement must have been completed by June 30, 2021.

Limited Subject Area Extension: The [time] limited extension is available to special education teachers with any of the eligible certificate titles identified above who will teach a special class but did not qualify for the SOCE. The limited extension enables these teachers to teach special classes for five years (with additional 5-year renewal option) while they complete the requirements for a subject area extension. Extensions are available in the following subjects: biology, chemistry, earth science, ELA, general science, languages other than English, mathematics, physics, and social studies.

Limited extensions can be obtained by:

- having at least two years of satisfactory full-time teaching experience with students with disabilities in grades 7-12 prior to July 1, 2021, and be deemed Highly Qualified by a district in the subject area using the HOUSSE rubric; or
- passing an industry accepted exam in the subject area; or

- completing at least 9 credits of course work in the subject area; or
- completing at least 45 CTLE hours in the subject area and either:
 - having at least two years of satisfactory full-time teaching experience with students with disabilities in grades 7-12 in the subject area, or
 - being mentored for at least one year by a teacher in the school or school district who holds a professional or permanent certificate in the subject area.

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Subject Area Extension: The subject area extension is available to special education teachers with any of the eligible certificate titles identified above who teach one or more subject areas in a special class in grades 7-12, with some or no students under alternate assessment. The subject area extension requires 12 credits in a content area (biology, chemistry, earth science, ELA, general science, languages other than English, mathematics, physics, and social studies) or passing the corresponding Content Specialty Test.

Depending upon the special education certificate (permanent or initial/professional) held by the teacher, the subject area certificate may include some or all of the following:

- Being fingerprinted;
- Child Abuse Identification and Reporting workshop;
- School Violence Intervention and Prevention workshop;
- 6-hour DASA workshop;
- Autism workshop.

ATTACHMENT A: Current SED Guidance

Special Education Teaching Assignments and Certification

The following table shows the certification required for various types of special education teaching assignments. The types of teaching assignments are described on the [Continuum of Special Education Services for School-Age Students with Disabilities webpage](#). Certification requirements are available on the [Search Certification Requirements webpage](#).

Effective July 1, 2021, all special education teachers who teach a subject area in a special class (self-contained class) with some or no students under alternate assessment in grades 7-12 must be certified in the subject area, including Permanent Special Education certificate holders. They could earn subject area certification through a [limited extension](#), [SOCE](#), [subject area extension](#), or [additional certificate](#).

Please note that special education teachers can only teach students who are in the grade levels in which their certificate is valid, with the exception of teachers who teach a [special class where all students are under alternate assessment](#).

For questions about teaching assignments that are not answered in the following table, please contact the Office of Special Education at speced@nysed.gov. For questions about certification requirements, please contact the Office of Teaching Initiatives at tcert@nysed.gov.

Special Education Certification	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Special Education Teaching Assignment:		
		Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Birth-Grade 2) only	Yes	Birth-Grade 2	Birth-Grade 2	All grades
SWD (Birth-Grade 2) • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 3-4)	Yes	Birth-Grade 4	Birth-Grade 4	All grades
SWD (Grades 1-6) only	No	Grades 1-6	Grades 1-6	All grades
SWD (Grades 1-6) • With SWD grade-level extension (PK-K)	Yes	PK-Grade 6	PK-Grade 6	All grades
SWD (Grades 1-6) • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 7-8)	No	Grades 1-8	Grades 1-6*	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist only	No	Grades 5-9	Grades 5-6*	All grades

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 10- 12)	No	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-6*	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist • With a subject area certificate or extension in grades 7-12 and in the subject area to be taught	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-9 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held* 	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist • With a limited extension or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and in the subject area to be taught (only valid in a special class)	No	Grades 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held* 	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Content Specialist only	No	Grades 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-9 in the subject area of the content specialty* 	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Content Specialist • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 10- 12)	No	Grades 5-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty* 	All grades

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Grades 5-9) Content Specialist • With a subject area limited extension or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and the subject area to be taught (only valid in a special class)	No	Grades 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 5-6 • Grades 7-9 in the subject area of content specialty • Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held* 	All grades
SWD Generalist (Grades 7-12) only	No	Grades 7-12	Not eligible; does not hold content area certification*	All grades
SWD Generalist (Grades 7-12) • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 5-6)	No	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-6*	All grades
SWD Generalist (Grades 7-12) • With a subject area certificate, extension, limited extension, or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and in the subject area to be taught	No	Grades 7-12	Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held*	All grades
SWD (Grades 7-12) Content Specialist only	No	Grades 7-12	Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty*	All grades
SWD (Grades 7-12) Content Specialist • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 5-6)	No	Grades 5-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty* 	All grades

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Grades 7-12) Content Specialist • With a subject area limited extension or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7- 12 and the subject area to be taught	No	Grades 7-12	• Grades 5-6 • Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty • Grades 7-12 in the subject area of certificate held*	All grades
Permanent Special Education only	Yes	Birth-Grade 12	Birth-Grade 6*	All grades
Permanent Special Education • With a subject area certificate, extension, limited extension, or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7- 12 and the subject area to be taught	Yes	Birth-Grade 12	• Birth-Grade 6 • Grades 7-12 in the subject area of certificate held*	All grades

* Through June 30, 2021, special education teachers may teach a particular subject area in a special class in grades 7-12 for which they do not hold subject area certification **only if** they: 1) hold a certificate at the appropriate grade/developmental level, and 2) would be considered Highly Qualified in the subject area throughout their teaching assignment in a special class through passing a [HOUSSE rubric](#). The HOUSSE rubric completed by the school district for this purpose can also be used for the limited extension and statement of continued eligibility (SOCE) application.

Severe or Multiple Disabilities Annotation

Special education teachers who hold the Severe or Multiple Disabilities Annotation can teach a special class where all students are under alternative assessment and all students have severe cognitive disabilities. Students can be at any developmental level (birth-grade 12).