



## Guide for Substitute Teacher Certification and Employment in New Jersey

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### 1. Background and Purpose

This handbook offers consolidated guidance about substitute teacher requirements in New Jersey for school districts, county offices of education, and individuals seeking to serve as substitutes. In November 2015, the State Board of Education adopted modifications to the regulations governing the time limits for substitutes, effective January 1, 2016, and shown below:

Credential/Certification	Previous Service Limit (In Same Class Per School Year)	New Service Limit (In Same Class Per School Year)
Substitute Credential; Ed Services or Admin. Certificates	20 instructional days, extendable to 40	No change
Career & Technical Education (CTE) Substitute Credential	20 instructional days, extendable to 40	40 instructional days
Certificate of Eligibility (CE) or Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) <b>not in</b> subject area of classroom where substitute is placed	20 instructional days, extendable to 40	40 instructional days
Standard certificate <b>not in</b> subject area of classroom where substitute is placed	40 instructional days	No change
CE or CEAS <b>in</b> subject area of classroom area where substitute is placed	60 instructional days	<b>Can be extended from 60 instructional days to entire school year</b> For an extension beyond 60 days, CEAS and CE substitutes must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a provisional certificate;</li> <li>• Be enrolled in or have completed a mentoring program; and</li> <li>• Be enrolled in or have completed a CE or CEAS educator preparation program.</li> </ul>
Standard certificate <b>in</b> subject area of classroom area where substitute is placed	Not specified in regulations	<b>Can be extended from 60 instructional days to entire school year</b>



## 2. Key Definitions

A “substitute teacher” is a person assigned to temporarily fill an unfilled position. There are two types of positions that substitutes fill:

- **Vacancy:** A position unfilled due to retirement, resignation, or other cause for permanent departure. School districts are required by statute (*N.J.S.A. 18A:16-1.1b*) to fill the vacancy within 60 days (extendable by the Executive County Superintendent for good cause).
- **Temporary leave:** A position temporarily unfilled due to a long- or short-term absence.

## 3. Credential Options for New Jersey Substitutes

There are two ways to qualify as a substitute teacher in New Jersey:

1. Hold a New Jersey educator credential (teacher, administrator, educational services); OR
2. Apply for a substitute-specific credential (see [Section 4](#) for application details):
  - **Substitute Credential**
    - ✓ At least 60 semester-hour credits at a regionally-accredited college or university
    - ✓ Criminal history background clearance
  - **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Substitute Credential (authorized to serve only in a CTE classroom)**
    - ✓ Two years of full-time work experience in the past five years in a related field
    - ✓ Criminal history background clearance

## 4. Applying for a Substitute or CTE Substitute Credential

The steps for credential application are depicted and described below.



- 1. Seek a sponsor district or organization for criminal history clearance**

The sponsoring organization should be the candidate’s teacher preparation program, school district, or vendor organization that the candidate will serve (Source4Teachers or Insight Educational Workforce Solutions). If the candidate plans to substitute in multiple districts, he or she must select at least one for application purposes.
- 2. Pay administrative fees for the criminal history background clearance on the New Jersey Department of Education [Criminal History Website](#) (\$11).**
- 3. Go to the [IdentoGO website](#) in order to:**
  - ✓ Schedule an appointment;
  - ✓ Pay fingerprinting fees (\$67.45 for those who have never been fingerprinted in NJ); and
  - ✓ Fill out IdentoGO New Jersey Universal Fingerprint Form
- 4. Get fingerprinted – make sure to bring the following:**



- ✓ Picture ID (Note: Foreign passports will no longer be accepted as proof of identification); and
- ✓ Identogo NJ Universal Fingerprint Form

5. **Verify criminal history status.**

For more detailed instructions on criminal history clearance click [here](#).

6. **Deliver the following information to your County Office of Education:**

- ✓ [Substitute credential application](#);
- ✓ Notarized [Oath of Allegiance](#) form;
- ✓ Sealed college transcripts proving at least 60 college credit hours (substitute credential) OR signed letter from employer documenting work experience (CTE substitute credential only);
- ✓ Approved [criminal history status check](#); and
- ✓ \$125 certificate fee by check or money order payable to the Commissioner of Education

**5. Service Limits and Related District Processes\***

The following time limits apply to substitute teachers hired by the school district or outside vendors. The form for notifying the Executive County Superintendent of a substitute serving beyond the service limit detailed below can be found [here](#).

Credential/ Certificate	Service Limit (In Same Class Per Year)	Related Process
<b>Substitute Credential; Educational Services or Administrative Certificates</b>	20 instructional days	Upon extenuating circumstances, a substitute may serve up to 40 total instructional days in same classroom. School district must notify the Executive County Superintendent if teacher substitutes in same classroom beyond 20 days.
<b>CTE Substitute Credential</b>	40 instructional days	n/a
<b>CE or CEAS <u>not in</u> subject area of classroom where substitute is placed</b>	40 instructional days	School district must notify the Executive County Superintendent if teacher substitutes in same classroom for more than 20 days.
<b>Standard certificate <u>not in</u> subject area of classroom where substitute is placed</b>	40 instructional days	
<b>CE or CEAS <u>in</u> subject area of classroom area where substitute is placed</b>	Can be extended from 60 instructional days to up to one academic year; for an extension beyond 60 days, CEAS and CE substitutes must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a provisional certificate;</li> <li>• Be enrolled in or have completed a mentoring program; and</li> <li>• Be enrolled in or have completed CE or CEAS educator preparation program.</li> </ul>	School district must notify the Executive County Superintendent if teacher substitutes in the same classroom more than 60 days.
<b>Standard certificate <u>in</u> subject area of classroom area where substitute is placed</b>	Can be extended from 60 instructional days to up to one academic year	



## 6. Terms of Employment

While the Department sets time limitations for substitutes, it does not set employment terms. Employment terms—compensation, title, status, etc.—for substitutes are generally determined by individual school districts and/or collective bargaining agreements. See also, *N.J.S.A. 18A:16-1.1b*, which states that, at a minimum, a teacher who is employed as a substitute in the same vacant position for more than 60 days “be compensated by the school district on a pro-rata basis consistent with the salary provided to a teacher [in that district] with similar credentials.”

**For questions related to employment terms, the Department recommends contacting the district’s human resource department and/or legal counsel.**

## 7. Considerations for Substitutes Serving More than 60 Instructional Days in One Classroom in the Same School Year

**Individuals eligible to serve more than 60 instructional days in the same classroom:**

- Those holding a standard certificate in the field of instruction
- Those holding a Certificate of Eligibility (CE) or Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) in the field of instruction ***if the following conditions are met:***
  - ✓ Candidate holds a provisional certificate;
  - ✓ Candidate is enrolled in or is provided a mentoring program; and
  - ✓ Candidate enrolls in or has completed a CE educator preparation program (CE only)

**District process for extending substitute period beyond 60 days:**

1. District notifies Executive County Superintendent using [form](#)
2. For CE/CEAS holders:
  - ✓ District must apply for a provisional certificate (on or before 60 days of employment); and
  - ✓ Candidate must be enrolled in the Provisional Teacher Process (PTP) and provided a mentor within 60 instructional days of starting in a position

*NOTE: The Department recommends the district enroll the candidate in the PTP and provide a mentor as soon as the district becomes aware the candidate will serve in a position for more than 60 instructional days.*

**Performance evaluation considerations:**

The school district has full discretion regarding whether or not to formally evaluate a substitute under AchieveNJ. Note that a substitute need not serve in a position for a full school year to be evaluated under AchieveNJ. Guidance on how to evaluate a candidate serving for less than a full school year can be found [here](#).

*Department Recommendations:*

Districts should develop a consistent district-wide policy and communicate that policy to any substitute employed in the district. Policies should include:

- A uniform amount of time that a substitute must serve in order to be formally evaluated under AchieveNJ.
- Where applicable, evaluation procedures for substitutes employed through a third party vendor contract, since these individuals, although sourced and paid through another entity, are ultimately the responsibility of the district.



**Compensation:**

Compensation for extended substitute positions is generally determined by individual school districts and/or collective bargaining agreements. For related questions, districts should contact their human resource department and/or legal counsel. See also the [Terms of Employment](#) section above.



## 8. Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Answer
<p>1. Does the Executive County Superintendent need to approve a substitute teacher staying longer than the regulatory service limit?</p>	<p>No. As of January 1, 2016, the Executive County Superintendent will not need to grant approval. School districts will be required to report to the county office when any substitute exceeds the regulatory service limit. <b>Note: A substitute credential holder, CTE substitute credential holder, or holder of a certificate with an endorsement outside of the subject being taught may not, under any circumstances, serve more than 40 total days in the same classroom per year.</b></p>
<p>2. Do the same requirements for certification and service limits apply to substitute teachers employed through vendors such as Source4Teachers?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>3. As of what date will the new substitute rules be enforced?</p>	<p>January 1, 2016</p>
<p>4. Is there a change in who processes substitute applications?</p>	<p>No. County offices will continue to process substitute applications.</p>
<p>5. Does a candidate seeking a substitute credential need to be “sponsored” by a school district?</p>	<p>No. However, they do need a sponsoring entity. See <a href="#">Section 4</a> of this document for guidance about which entities may sponsor a substitute.</p>
<p>6. Does a candidate need to have 2 yrs of relevant work experience to get a CTE substitute credential?</p>	<p>Yes. Further, any candidate who holds a CTE substitute credential shall be eligible to serve in the same classroom for up to 40 days per school year.</p>
<p>7. Can a person with a substitute credential serve as a substitute for a Teacher of Students with Disabilities (TOSD)?</p>	<p>Yes. The same substitute rules apply for all teaching positions.</p>
<p>8. If it is known that a substitute candidate with a CE/CEAS will be serving as a substitute for more than 60 days in the same position, should the district enroll him/her in the Provisional Teacher Process (PTP) at the start of employment.</p>	<p>Yes. The Department strongly recommends helping CE/CEAS candidates get the required supports (mentor, coursework, etc.) by enrolling them in the PTP as soon as possible.</p>



<p>9. If a provisional teacher serves as a substitute for part of the year, is there guidance on how this impacts their required “year-long” mentorship in terms of time and payment?</p>	<p>Districts have the flexibility to define “year-long” to be a duration of at least 30 weeks but no longer than one school year. The Department strongly recommends defining the exact length in district policy and communicating this policy to substitutes.</p> <p>Pro-rating Time &amp; Payment: For any candidate serving less than an entire year in the district, the district must pro-rate the mentorship program and subsequent payment based on the length of their mentorship program (a minimum of 30 weeks and maximum the length of an entire school year).</p>
<p>10. If a provisional teacher is evaluated as a substitute in one district one year and another district the following year, do the ratings follow them?</p>	<p>Yes. For the purposes of certification, evaluations completed in one district will follow a provisional teacher to the next district.</p>
<p>11. If a teacher is hired through a vendor to serve as a substitute for longer than 60 days, can they be evaluated?</p>	<p>Yes. Substitutes working through a vendor contract are still the responsibility of the district and districts have the discretion to evaluate any teacher working in their district. The Department strongly recommends that districts create a consistent policy regarding the evaluation of substitutes serving longer than 60 days in the same position and communicate that policy to all substitutes prior to employment.</p>