

Executive Summary: New York State School and District Administrator State Certification

**A Position Statement of the
 New York State Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators**

There is an urgent need for policy and legislative support on initial state certification of professional school building and district administration that includes “study and experience to initiate and support early childhood teachers and programs.”

Rationale: The goals of the Common Core and New York State Pre-K Standards increase school and district administrative leaders’ responsibility for evaluation of pre-k/kindergarten teachers that impacts the quality of early education in order to fulfill the expanded responsibility to fit the systemic approach to high quality early childhood education within the longitudinal continuum of learning. The particular preparation of leaders to support early childhood teachers can enhance the effect of limited resources.

Research-based Principles

Policy Considerations

<p>Young children (birth-8 years) learn in different ways than older children. Young children bring to their school education broadly different backgrounds and experiences, e.g., as much as 500% variation in vocabulary development (Hart & Risley; Heath).</p>	<p>Administrators who are prepared to understand the diversity of early development and education are in a stronger position to fulfill their supervisory role to create high quality learning experiences that serve the continuum of learning.</p>
<p>Hiring teachers certified in early childhood education yields better standardized test scores (Seplocha & Strasser).</p>	<p>Rational extension of teaching certificates for other educators should include certified teachers’ transcripts from a state-approved program that includes early curriculum; supervised guidance strategies and field work with typical pre-k/kindergarten children; and child development study devoted to the early years.</p>
<p>Hiring teachers certified in early childhood education yields fewer retentions and special education placements, increases high school graduation, reduces incarceration, and strong employment histories (Campbell et al.; Reynolds et al.; Schweinhart et al.; Stipek et al.).</p>	<p>Those who seek certification extension or administrator certification need preparation in how teachers can match teaching with the active and playful ways in which young children learn to support and extend their ongoing learning.</p>
<p>Young children build a sense of confidence as they transition from home to school when schools demonstrate family support (Ladson-Billings; Maldonado & Bello). Building principals significantly influences school climate and the nature of learning in schools (French et al.; Rust).</p>	<p>Administrators need preparation to demonstrate <i>authentic</i> ways to value, support, and engage diverse families. Building-level and school district administrators need professional preparation to initiate and support early childhood programs.</p>

Early Childhood Education Specialization Study Domains* For Certification of School Administrators

[The recommendations that follow include *integration* of early childhood study domains within school administration preparation programs, as well as *at least one course* designed for leaders devoted to early childhood development, guidance, and curriculum *with exemplary field-based models.*]

State certification of school administrators should require that they understand the study domains below and how to support early childhood teachers to:

Study Domains	Implementation
Curriculum Content	Use the <i>tools</i> of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts in diverse ways that relate to conceptual content and the Common Core and Pre-K standards by providing rich and varied curriculum experiences. Study how to relate early pedagogic strategies to state standards that includes interdisciplinary approaches. Become acquainted with the range of curriculum activities in early childhood action-based learning environments, including projects.
Organization	Differentiate instruction for all children by designing classroom environments, equipping, scheduling, and organizing with simultaneous small groups, thereby building children’s self-regulation.
Instructional Strategies	Match planning and instruction to the active conditions for early learning. Learn how to adapt the sequence of teaching in ways that build on children’s experiences, beginning with comparing pictures, and then comparing and using symbols.
Assessment of Young Children	Use <i>multiple</i> forms of developmentally appropriate assessment to identify the accomplishments of young children in order to shape plans for the next steps of teaching. Study questioning strategies that young children can understand and from which they can extend their learning and interpersonal skills. Learn about child-sensitive assessment instruments; and Assess observed learning benchmarks within instructional strategies.
Assessment of Early Childhood Teachers	Administrators: Learn the diverse ways to observe, understand, coach, supervise, and evaluate the features of effective early childhood curriculum. Learn how to assess the competence of early childhood teachers based upon curriculum planning, implementation, organization, and assessment of children’s ongoing learning.

*The study domains have been identified with school administrators.

Professional Associations

This summary supports and builds upon the joint position statement of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE), the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)*, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Association for Teacher Education (ATE); (and the support of the New York State Pre-Kindergarten Directors is pending). The National Association of Elementary School Principals includes the following publications: (2005). *Learning early childhood learning communities: What principals should know and be able to do*; and (2009). *Getting it right from the start: The principal’s guide to early childhood education*. The New York State Governor’s Education Reform Commission (2012) with support of the NYS Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council includes concern for preparation of public school principals to support early childhood education.