



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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Assembly Bill No. 2502 Assembly Education Committee February 8, 2016

The state colleges and universities oppose Assembly Bill No. 2502, which would prohibit the State Board of Education from limiting the number of professional education credits earned at a county college that may be applied toward the requirements for teacher certification.

This legislation raises serious accreditation concerns for our schools of education. All of New Jersey's four-year colleges and universities with teacher-education programs must be accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. To maintain national accreditation, our schools of education must prove that our students have achieved certain outcomes, not that they took specific courses.

In other words, our schools must be able to evaluate—at each stage of the teacher education program, including the first two years—what our teacher-education students know, and what they are able to do. The articulation proposed in this bill does not permit such ongoing assessment of learning outcomes, and could thereby jeopardize accreditation.

The bill also has implications for teacher-education standards. The Department of Education requires New Jersey's schools of education to develop a coherent set of courses in the professional-education sequence. Schools must show how these courses introduce, develop, and help students master each state standard. Coursework from 100- and 200-level courses and prerequisite experiences build on each other. By the time students take advanced courses at the 300 and 400 level, they are required to have in-class teaching experience to enable them to master teacher-education standards. Schools cannot effectively evaluate a student's progress from 100-level to 400-level courses under the terms of this legislation.

The New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and New Jersey's county colleges have initiated a pilot program to explore alternatives the six-credit limit. Four community college and four-year university pairs are in the pilot. The goal of this work is to advise future changes in code around the six-credit limit. Removing the six-credit limit without the results of the pilot may place transfer student at risk of having to repeat courses to comply with national accreditation standards and requirements for certification under State regulation.

Among New Jersey's sectors of higher education, the state colleges and universities produce the most teachers, who are an essential part of the state's workforce and the key to our children's future. The critically important issue of requirements for teacher certification should be part of a larger discussion among the Department of Education, the experts from our institutions, and the legislature. We look forward to participating in those discussions.

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