The State Board of Education has developed draft rules to implement the new certification system for special education teachers. These rules have been designed to guide the transition from the present system of certification to the new system, with particular emphasis on how current teachers will be affected by the move to a cross-categorical credential called Learning Behavior Specialist I (LBS I). The LBS I teacher will serve students with all disabilities except visual, hearing, and speech/language impairments. That endorsement will replace current endorsements for LD, BD, EMH, TMH, and PH.

Some current special education teachers have already been broadly enough prepared to appropriately serve students with all of the disabilities covered by the LBS I. Some have not. The rules therefore distinguish between teachers who hold the combination of endorsements that make them immediately eligible for the LBS I (see below) and teachers with more limited training who will need time to acquire the full range of knowledge and skills.

Teachers in the latter group will receive a certificate designated as “LBS I/Limited” and, until the limitation is removed, they will not be assigned to teach students except in the disability areas of their current endorsements. This provision is intended to ensure that students are taught by teachers with appropriate and sufficient preparation during this transition.

The rules for the LBS I endorsement:

- acknowledge that even teachers who hold the required combination of endorsements may not be comfortable working with students with a variety of disabilities. For example, a teacher might hold multiple endorsements but his or her experience has been limited to students with one type of disability. The rules therefore allow the “unlimited” LBS I teachers to “opt out” of LBS I assignments for one year so they can refresh their preparation.

- provide five options for removing the “limitation” on the LBS I endorsement within the timelines. These options include formal coursework and demonstration of qualifications through passage of a test.

- link the court’s requirements regarding continuing professional development for special education teachers to the differentiated LBS I credentials.

  ➢ All special education teachers will be required to complete 50 percent of the continuing professional development they need for certificate renewal in the area of special education. Teachers with an LBS I/Limited certificate will have to
devote some of their *continuing professional development* to “other disability areas” -- in other words, fill in the gaps in their preparation.

- Once the limitation on their certificates has been removed, special education teachers will still have to follow the “50% rule” but they will not have to address “other disability areas” unless they wish to do so.

The proposed rules address a number of other issues, including requirements for categorical certificates, the LBS II credential, special education teaching approval, and short-term emergency certification. The provisions related to approval and emergency certification have been designed to move these certificate-holders toward full LBS I certification.

The proposed rules are admittedly complex and must be so in order to provide a comprehensive regulatory foundation. When the rules are finally approved, the State Board will provide information to teachers in language and format that are as simple as possible.

These rules will go through the ordinary rulemaking procedure, which includes initial review by the State Teacher Certification Board and the State Board of Education, at least 45 days for public comment, final action by the State Board, and review by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules before the rules are filed with the Secretary of State.

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The following description of the rules is a summary and therefore does not include all of the details for each issue.

### NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE

When these rules go into effect, the following special education endorsements will be available on the initial, standard, or master Special Preschool-Age 21 Certificate:

- Learning Behavior Specialist I (LBS I)
- Teacher of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Teacher of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Speech-Language Pathologist

The LBS I endorsement will replace certain disability-specific endorsements that have been used to describe the categories of students a teacher may be assigned to serve: learning disabilities, social/emotional disorders (also called behavior disorders), trainable mentally handicapped, educable mentally handicapped, and physically handicapped.

An endorsement in early childhood special education will be available on the early childhood certificate.
EFFECT OF NEW “LEARNING BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST I” CREDENTIAL ON CURRENT SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

When
All current teachers who will eventually hold the LBS I endorsement will receive it:

• upon exchange for standard certificate, if they have not yet exchanged by the time the rules go into effect;
• automatically via re-issuance, if exchange has already taken place;
• automatically via re-issuance, if an initial or standard certificate was received without exchange.

Criteria
The proposal distinguishes between those whose preparation was broad enough to enable them to serve immediately in any LBS I assignment and those who cannot yet do so.

• A prescribed combination of existing endorsements and approvals (or the equivalent) will lead to an “unlimited” LBS I; holders of other combinations will receive a “limited” LBS I credential.
• The unlimited LBS I will be issued to those who hold credentials in
  ➢ learning disabilities or social/emotional disorders;
  
  AND
  
  ➢ educable mentally handicapped or trainable mentally handicapped or physically handicapped.

• The limited LBS I will be issued to individuals who do not meet the criterion above.

Teaching Assignments
• Each LBS I/Limited teacher can only be assigned to teach students with the disabilities reflected in the limitations (e.g., LBS I/Limited – Learning Disabilities).
• After the removal of the limitation, the teacher may be assigned to serve students with any of the disabilities covered by the LBS I credential.
• Teachers who automatically receive the unlimited LBS I endorsement will be allowed to “opt out” for one year of teaching while they acquire additional training they believe they need to teach the students with disabilities covered by the LBS I credential; the assignments of teachers who choose to “opt out” will continue to be limited during that year.
Removal of Limitations
The proposal offers several avenues to the removal of limitations:
• Completion of a training sequence developed by ISBE;
• Completion of college coursework covering the “missing” characteristics and methods;
• Passage of the test of subject matter knowledge relevant to a “missing” disability;
• Presentation of qualifications for additional endorsements or approvals;
• Passage of the LBS I test of subject matter knowledge (when available).

Timeline for Removal of Limitations
The proposal requires each certificate-holder who receives a limited LBS I endorsement or approval to remove the limitations in order to carry that credential forward into his or her next certification cycle.

• For holders of initial certificates, limitations must be removed in order to carry the LBS I endorsement forward onto the standard certificate (However, out-of-state recipients of initial certificates with less than three years of teaching remaining have one renewal cycle on the standard certificate within which to do so.)

• For holders of standard and master certificates, limitations must be removed in order to carry the LBS I endorsement forward at the time of certificate renewal.

Applicability
The requirement for removal of limitations applies whether or not the special education teaching credential is currently being used.

CERTIFICATE RENEWAL AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Special education teachers must fulfill continuing professional development requirements for certificate renewal. They will be required to devote 50 percent of the credits they need to a combination of work in their own current areas of certification, endorsement, or teaching assignment and the State priority of special education. Thus 50 percent of their total credits must be in special education.

For teachers who receive the LBS I/Limited endorsement, some of the credits must be related to the needs of students with disabilities other than those covered by their existing endorsements under the current structure. The amount teachers devote to this purpose can vary from individual to individual.
EFFECT ON NEW TEACHERS

When these rules take effect, all new teachers receiving initial special preschool-age 21 certificates will receive the following endorsements, as applicable:

- Learning Behavior Specialist I
- Teacher of Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Teacher of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Speech-Language Pathologist (Master’s degree required)

These endorsements will be carried forward when these individuals qualify for standard certificates.

An endorsement in early childhood special education will be available on the early childhood certificate.

LEARNING BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST II (LBS II)

The LBS II is an optional, advanced credential that will be available beginning January 1, 2003, to holders of standard or master certificates with any of the endorsements listed above. To receive such an endorsement, an individual will be required to complete an approved program.

The LBS II endorsement will be available in the areas of: Transition Specialist, Technology Specialist, Bilingual Special Education Specialist, Deaf/Blind Specialist, Behavior Intervention Specialist, Curriculum Adaptation Specialist, and Multiple Disabilities Specialist.

CHOICES FOR SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Speech-language pathologists who exchanged certificates prior to the effective date of these rules may exchange their certificates for school services personnel (Type 73) certificates endorsed for non-teaching speech-language pathology if they request this exchange on or before June 30, 2002, to be effective July 1, 2002.

Speech-language pathologists who exchange their certificates after the rules take effect may choose:

- a standard special preschool-age 21 (Type 10) certificate endorsed for speech-language; or

- both a standard elementary and a standard secondary certificate (Types 03 and 09) endorsed for speech-language; or

- a school service personnel certificate endorsed for non-teaching speech-language pathology.
Teachers who do not hold full special education teaching certification may currently teach students with disabilities under two arrangements: teaching approval and authorization for assignment. The requirements related to both of these are being changed.

Beginning January 1, 2002, special education teaching approval (a credential issued to the individual) will be valid for 3 years and will be nonrenewable. The teacher must make a transition to an unlimited LBS I endorsement by the end of the 3 years in order to continue teaching students with disabilities.

As of January 1, 2002, short-term emergency certification will replace the current “authorization for assignment” (issued to the employing district when no fully qualified individual can be recruited and better known as the “PZZ”).

- A teacher will be able to receive an emergency certificate, valid for three years, if he/she holds an Illinois elementary, secondary, early childhood or special teaching certificate (which need not be a certificate valid for the grade level(s) to be taught under the emergency certificate).
- A plan for moving toward an unlimited LBS I approval must be submitted and validated by the college or university the teacher is working with, as well as the teacher’s employer.
- The teacher’s plan must be completed within the 3 years of the emergency certificate’s validity unless specified circumstances prevent it.