

## VSBPE

Date: Sept. 12, 2024

Item: VTSU Special Ed Pilot Program Update

**ITEM: Shall the VSBPE approve VTSU's Special Education pilot program to allow a third cohort to enroll and start the program in January 2025?**

### **AGENCY RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**That the VSBPE approve VTSU's request to enroll a third cohort as long as VTSU makes a commitment to undergo a ROPA New Program Review in 2026 if they plan on continuing the program after the third cohort is completed.**

### **BACKGROUND:**

At the January 2023 Board meeting, the board approved NVU/VTSU's proposal for a five-course sequence\* that would lead to Special Education licensure via Transcript Review. Except for this program, candidates may not apply for initial licensure in Special Education via Transcript Review, as there are several approved programs in the state leading to the endorsement. This approval is valid until February 2026, at which time the board plans to review the program to determine future approval.

VTSU is asking for that review to happen now so that they can enroll a third cohort.

Information provided by VTSU:

- No completers yet, so no completer data (first cohort finishes this December, are being supervised in student teaching now)
- Eight students completing this December. All of this have finished the four course sequence and are now student teaching. All from rural Northwest VT: Five from Franklin Northeast, one from Missisquoi Valley, and one from Maple Run.
- In terms of effectiveness, all eight began the program in their first year as emergency special educators, and all have continued in the field into their second year. None have left their positions while in the program.
- Second cohort has five teachers in it currently, with room for more. In this cohort, all the teachers are from schools in the NEK. Both of cohorts are from places far from programs in rural areas.
- I was recently awarded a grant of \$71,771.66 from the AOE to support this program.

\*Course sequence:

- Practical Planning and Assessment (Summer) (3 credits)
- Classroom Management, Differentiation, and Learner Development (Fall) (3 credits)
- Law and Ethics (Winter) (3 credits)
- Content Specific Knowledge (Spring) (3 credits)

The following courses are optional to complete the graduate certificate, but required to apply for transcript review:

- EDU 6850 (or equivalent) Student Teaching (6 credits)
- EDU 6970 Capstone (3 credits)

Normally, a candidate would have a certain number of credits in general education to meet the core teaching standards as well as the required 21 credits minimum in Special Education. This program is abbreviated and works with candidates who are current special educators under temporary licensure. It also has a waiver to allow successful completers to obtain their initial licensure via Transcript Review.

#### **RATIONALE:**

If the first cohort started in summer 2023 and will finish in December 2024, it seems to be an 18-month program. Therefore, assuming the third cohort would start in January 2025, they would finish in summer 2026, beyond the initial approval granted for the pilot. As the program has not been able to collect much data on effectiveness beyond teacher retention, and there is clearly still a shortage of special educators in the state, and we would prefer to see new teachers who are working under temporary licenses have support as they are learning the profession, the office supports allowing VTSU to enroll a third cohort with the understanding that if VTSU is hoping to continue this program after the third cohort completes it, they will need to schedule a ROPA New Program review to occur in 2026 (the review will need to be scheduled in 2025 to take place in 2026).

#### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:**

Flier with program information

Information that was provided to the Board in 2023 (Curriculum Request Form)