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TO: School District Superintendents & Special Education Directors

RE: Reimbursement of Special Education Teacher Salaries under IDEA

Background

For a special education teacher's salary to be reimbursable under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the teacher must be fully certified and endorsed as a special education teacher in accordance with federal law.

As districts prepare for the 2019–20 school year, questions have arisen regarding whether salaries are reimbursable under IDEA in cases where a teacher holds something other than a standard or initial teaching certificate.

Certification and Endorsement Requirements

In 2018, the Office of Special Education informed districts of planned updates to **Rule 51** that will align Nebraska's requirements with federal law. These updates are intended to ensure that reimbursement under IDEA is limited to teachers who hold a full special education endorsement.

- **Expectation Moving Forward:** The Office of Special Education intends to proceed with these changes, and districts should plan accordingly.
- **District Action:** School districts are strongly encouraged to support any staff who do not yet hold a full special education endorsement in completing the necessary requirements to secure one. This will safeguard future IDEA reimbursement eligibility for special education salaries.

Alternative and Transitional Permits

Questions have also been raised regarding teachers who hold either an **Alternative Program Teaching Permit** or a **Transitional Teaching Permit.** These permits are issued only to individuals who do not yet meet the qualifications for a standard or initial teaching certificate.

- Educators holding these permits have not achieved full certification.
- As a result, their salaries **are not reimbursable** under IDEA.

- Such individuals may still provide special education services if they are working toward a special education endorsement under Rule 24; however, their salaries will not qualify for IDEA reimbursement.

Next Steps and Contact Information

Districts are strongly encouraged to plan proactively by supporting provisionally endorsed staff in obtaining full certification. For specific questions regarding teacher certification or endorsement status, please contact:

Amy Rhone
Office of Special Education
Nebraska Department of Education
Email: amy.rhone@nebraska.gov
Phone: 402-477-0209

The Office of Special Education will collaborate with the Office of Teacher Certification as needed to address district-specific questions.