

NYS Certification: Students with Disabilities



No. 20-10 (Updated/Revised December 2021)

December 2021

BACKGROUND

Special education certification has undergone many changes in the past 20 years. Prior to 2004, the special education certificate was considered an ‘All Grades’ certificate, or K-12. Individuals with this certificate could fulfill any and all assignments related to special education, including special class assignments.

In 2004 the special education certificate was replaced by the certificate title of Students with Disabilities (SWD) and this SWD title was broken into four (4) grade level certificates:

- SWD: Birth – Grade 2
- SWD: Grades 1 – 6
- SWD: Grades 5 – 9
- SWD: Grades 7-12: Content Area.

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The SWD Grades 5-9 certificate was further delineated into a generalist title (for non-departmentalized assignments) or a content-specific title. The SWD Grades 7-12 certificates were separated into content area, requiring knowledge of a specific content area in addition to the knowledge base in special education.

In 2011 the SWD: Grades 5-9 and the SWD: Grades 7-12 content-specific certificate titles were eliminated and replaced with the SWD Grades 7-12 Generalist certificate, with the availability of content area extensions that could be attached to this certificate.

In 2018-19, additional changes were made to the SWD titles; state regulations were amended to allow for grade level extensions to existing SWD certificate titles.

In the fall of 2019, SED more clearly defined the appropriate credentials for special education teachers assigned to special classes: a 7-12 subject area certificate, the Statement of Continued Eligibility, the Limited Subject Area Extension, or the Subject Area Extension.

GRADE-LEVEL EXTENSIONS

Current Certification	Teaching Experience Requirement	Teachers Choose One of the Following Requirements:		Grade Extension to Current SWD Certificate
		Continuing Teacher & Leader Education (CTLE)	College Course	
SWD Birth - Grade 2	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 1 st and/or 2 nd grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the elementary level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the elementary education level.	Grades 3-4
SWD Grades 1 -6	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 1 st and/or 2 nd grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the early childhood level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the early childhood education level.	PK-K
	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 5 th and/or 6 th grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Grades 7-8
SWD 7-12 Generalist or Content Specialist	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 7 th and/or 8 th grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the middle education level.	Grades 5-6
SWD 5-9 Generalist or Content Specialist	Minimum of 3 years teaching experience at 8 th and/or 9 th grade levels.	Minimum of 45 hours of acceptable CTLE focused on SWD at the adolescent education level AND 15 hours of acceptable CTLE in ELA OR 3 credits in ELA.	Minimum of 3 credits of pedagogical course work focused on SWD at the adolescent education level AND 15 hours of acceptable CTLE in ELA OR 3 credits in ELA.	Grades 10-12

For each of the grade level extensions, teaching experience is defined as at least 75% or more of the applicant's time is spent teaching students with disabilities in either of the two grade levels closest to the grade level extension during each of the three school years. Applicants for the grade level extension(s) use the state's [Verification of Paid Experience form for Classroom Teachers and Pupil Personnel Services Professionals: Professional and Permanent Certificates, Extensions, Limited Extensions, and Statements of Continued Eligibility](#) to fulfill this requirement.

New York State Teacher Centers offer state-approved CTLE courses that fulfill the requirement for grade level extensions. For information on availability of these courses, visit the Teacher Center website at [NYS Teachers Centers](#) and click on Professional Learning.

Statements of Continued Eligibility, Limited Subject Area Extensions AND Subject Area Extension

In addition to grade level flexibility, the State Education Department also adopted regulations to increase the flexibility of select Students with Disabilities certificates to teach special classes. The SWD titles eligible for this flexibility include: SWD 7-12 Generalist, SWD 7-12 Content Specialist, SWD 5-9 Generalist, SWD 5-9 Content Specialist, and Special Education K-12.

Effective July 1, 2021, special education teachers who teach one or more subject areas in a special class in grades 7-12, with some or no students under alternate assessment, must either:

- 1) be appropriately certified in each subject area that they teach, (content 7-12 certificate, Subject Area Extension, or Limited subject Area Extension), or
- 2) meet the teaching experience requirement for the statement of continued eligibility (SOCE) and have an active SOCE application in TEACH in each subject area that they teach.

Statement of Continued Eligibility or SOCE: The SOCE is available to special education teachers with any of the eligible certificate titles who have at least three years of full-time special education teaching experience in a special class with students in grades 7-12 prior to June 30, 2021, during which time they would have been considered Highly Qualified through passing a HOUSSE rubric in the subject area of the SOCE sought.

Special education teachers must have taught the subject area in a special class with students in grades 7-12 for at least one teaching assignment during each academic year (e.g., one period for an entire semester or year) under full-time employment. They do not need to have a teaching assignment in a special class in grades 7-12 on the date of their SOCE application, but they do need to be currently employed in a public school or other school for which teacher certification is required to teach a special class. The years of experience do not need to be contiguous.

Application Deadline: Individuals must have applied for the SOCE in TEACH and paid the application fee by June 30, 2021.

Special education teachers can complete the SOCE requirements within three years of the application date or two official state evaluations of the application, whichever comes first, with the exception that the teaching experience requirement must have been completed by June 30, 2021.

Special education teachers who seek more than one SOCE must pay for the first application however the fee for the additional applications can be waived by the state. Instructions to have the additional application fees waived are available at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/special-education-teacher-soce.html>.

The requirements for the SOCE include the HOUSSE rubric and Employment Verification form completed by the district, and depending upon the special education certificate held by the teacher, may include some or all of the following:

- Being fingerprinted;
- Child Abuse Identification and Reporting workshop;
- School Violence Intervention and Prevention workshop;
- 6-hour DASA workshop;
- Autism workshop.

Limited Subject Area Extension: The limited extension is available to special education teachers with any of the eligible certificate titles identified above who will teach a special class but do not qualify for the SOCE. The limited extension enables these teachers to teach special classes for five years (with additional 5-year renewal option) while they complete 18 credits required for a content area extension in the subject areas (biology, chemistry, earth science, ELA, general science, languages other than English, mathematics, physics, and social studies) they teach within the special class.

Limited extensions can be obtained by:

- having at least two years of satisfactory full-time teaching experience with students with disabilities in grades 7-12 prior to July 1, 2021, and be deemed Highly Qualified by a district in the subject area using the HOUSSE rubric; or
- passing the NYS Content Specialty Test in the subject area; or
- passing an industry accepted exam in the subject area; or
- completing at least 9 credits of course work in the subject area; or
- completing at least 45 CTLE hours in the subject area and either:
 - having at least two years of satisfactory full-time teaching experience with students with disabilities in grades 7-12 in the subject area, or
 - being mentored for at least one year by a teacher in the school or school district who holds a professional or permanent certificate in the subject area.

Subject Area Extension: The subject area extension is available to special education teachers with any of the eligible certificate titles identified above who teach one or more subject areas in a special class in grades 7-12, with some or no students under alternate assessment. The subject area extension requires 18 credits in a content area (biology, chemistry, earth science, ELA, general science, languages other than English, mathematics, physics, and social studies) and passing the corresponding Content Specialty Test.

Depending upon the special education certificate (permanent or initial/professional) held by the teacher, the subject area certificate may include some or all of the following:

- Being fingerprinted;
- Child Abuse Identification and Reporting workshop;
- School Violence Intervention and Prevention workshop;
- 6-hour DASA workshop;
- Autism workshop.

ATTACHMENTS

The attachments included in this Fact Sheet represent the evolution of SED guidance as to the assignment of special education teachers and the credentials appropriate for these assignments.

- **Attachment A, Special Education Teaching Assignments and Certification**, is the most current guidance from the state – released December 2019. Additional information related to the SOCE and Limited Extension is located at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/special-education-teacher.html> (Special Education Teacher Credential Options:Certification:OTI:NYSED.)
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- **Attachment B, ‘Special Education Certificate Titles and Teaching Assignment’** chart was SED’s guidance from 2011.
- **Attachment C, ‘Examples of Reporting Primary and Special Education Instructors in Course Instructor Assignment’** was SED’s guidance from 2017 through 2019.
- **Attachment D is SED’s Search Requirements** page with examples of how to search the requirements for the SOCE and/or Limited Extension.

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ATTACHMENT A: Current SED Guidance

Special Education Teaching Assignments and Certification

The following table shows the certification required for various types of special education teaching assignments. The types of teaching assignments are described on the [Continuum of Special Education Services for School-Age Students with Disabilities webpage](#). Certification requirements are available on the [Search Certification Requirements webpage](#).

Effective July 1, 2021, all special education teachers who teach a subject area in a special class (self-contained class) with some or no students under alternate assessment in grades 7-12 must be certified in the subject area, including Permanent Special Education certificate holders. They could earn subject area certification through a [limited extension](#), [SOCE](#), [subject area extension](#), or [additional certificate](#).

Please note that special education teachers can only teach students who are in the grade levels in which their certificate is valid, with the exception of teachers who teach a [special class where all students are under alternate assessment](#).

For questions about teaching assignments that are not answered in the following table, please contact the Office of Special Education at speced@nysed.gov. For questions about certification requirements, please contact the Office of Teaching Initiatives at tcert@nysed.gov.

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Birth-Grade 2) only	Yes	Birth-Grade 2	Birth-Grade 2	All grades
SWD (Birth-Grade 2) • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 3-4)	Yes	Birth-Grade 4	Birth-Grade 4	All grades
SWD (Grades 1-6) only	No	Grades 1-6	Grades 1-6	All grades
SWD (Grades 1-6) • With SWD grade-level extension (PK-K)	Yes	PK-Grade 6	PK-Grade 6	All grades
SWD (Grades 1-6) • With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 7-8)	No	Grades 1-8	Grades 1-6*	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist only	No	Grades 5-9	Grades 5-6*	All grades

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 10-12) 	No	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-6*	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a subject area certificate or extension in grades 7-12 and in the subject area to be taught 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-9 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held* 	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Generalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a limited extension or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and in the subject area to be taught (only valid in a special class) 	No	Grades 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held* 	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Content Specialist only	No	Grades 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-9 in the subject area of the content specialty* 	All grades
SWD (Grades 5-9) Content Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 10-12) 	No	Grades 5-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty* 	All grades

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Grades 5-9) Content Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a subject area limited extension or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and the subject area to be taught (only valid in a special class) 	No	Grades 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-9 in the subject area of content specialty Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held* 	All grades
SWD Generalist (Grades 7-12) only	No	Grades 7-12	Not eligible; does not hold content area certification*	All grades
SWD Generalist (Grades 7-12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 5-6) 	No	Grades 5-12	Grades 5-6*	All grades
SWD Generalist (Grades 7-12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a subject area certificate, extension, limited extension, or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and in the subject area to be taught 	No	Grades 7-12	Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the certificate held*	All grades
SWD (Grades 7-12) Content Specialist only	No	Grades 7-12	Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty*	All grades
SWD (Grades 7-12) Content Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With SWD grade-level extension (Grades 5-6) 	No	Grades 5-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty* 	All grades

Special Education Certification	Special Education Teaching Assignment:			
	Preschool Itinerant Teacher	Consultant Teacher, Resource Room Teacher, Integrated Co-Teacher	Special Class Teacher – Some or No Students Under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher – All Students Under Alternate Assessment
SWD (Grades 7-12) Content Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a subject area limited extension or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and the subject area to be taught 	No	Grades 7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 5-6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of the content specialty Grades 7-12 in the subject area of certificate held* 	All grades
Permanent Special Education only	Yes	Birth-Grade 12	Birth-Grade 6*	All grades
Permanent Special Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a subject area certificate, extension, limited extension, or statement of continued eligibility in grades 7-12 and the subject area to be taught 	Yes	Birth-Grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth-Grade 6 Grades 7-12 in the subject area of certificate held* 	All grades

* Through June 30, 2021, special education teachers may teach a particular subject area in a special class in grades 7-12 for which they do not hold subject area certification **only if** they: 1) hold a certificate at the appropriate grade/developmental level, and 2) would be considered Highly Qualified in the subject area throughout their teaching assignment in a special class through passing a [HOUSSE rubric](#). The HOUSSE rubric completed by the school district for this purpose can also be used for the limited extension and statement of continued eligibility (SOCE) application.

Severe or Multiple Disabilities Annotation

Special education teachers who hold the Severe or Multiple Disabilities Annotation can teach a special class where all students are under alternative assessment and all students have severe cognitive disabilities. Students can be at any developmental level (birth-grade 12).

ATTACHMENT B: SED Guidance Prior to Dec 2019

Special Education Certificate Titles and Teaching Assignment							
		Special Education Teaching Assignments					
Certificate Title	Grade Level (where instruction occurs)	(Preschool) Itinerant teacher	Consultant Teacher	Resource Room Teacher	Integrated Co Teaching Services	Special Class with All Students under Alternate Assessment	Special Class Teacher (Self-contained classroom)
K-12 Special Education Issued prior to 2/2/04	Pre K - Grade 12	√	√	√	√	√	√ see footnote #1
K-12 Special Education with Content Area Extension	Pre K - Grade 12	√	√	√	√	√	Grades Pre K-12 in Content Area of Extension ³
Students with Disabilities Birth - Grade 2	Early Intervention, Preschool, Kindergarten - Grade 2	√	√	√	√	√	Birth - Grade 2
Students with Disabilities Grades 1-6	Grades 1-6		√	√	√	√	Grades 1-6
Students with Disabilities Grades 5-9 Generalist	Grades 5-9		√	√	√	√	Grades 5-9 Common Branch Subjects
Students with Disabilities Grades 5-9 Generalist with Content Area Extension	Grades 5-9		√	√	√	√	Grades 5-9 Content Area of Extension ³
Students with Disabilities Grades 5-9 Content Specialist	Grades 5-9		√	√	√	√	Grades 5-9 Content Area of Certificate ^{1,2}
Students with Disabilities Grades 7-12 - Content Specialist	Grades 7-12		√	√	√	√	Grades 7-12 Content Area of Certificate(s) ^{1,2}
Students with Disabilities Grades 7-12 Generalist	Grades 7-12		√	√	√	√	
Students with Disabilities Grades 7-12 Generalist with Content Area Extension	Grades 7-12		√	√	√	√	Grades 7-12 in Content Area of Extension(s) ³

1 If the teacher holding this certificate meets the federal definition of highly qualified for a core academic subject, he or she may teach that academic area at the grade level of his or her certificate to students in a special class. The department recommends collaboration between the special education teacher and the general education teacher of the content area.

2 A teacher holding one of the SWD Content Specialist certificate is also qualified for the comparable general education certificate, but must apply for and hold the general education certificate to teach the general education assignment.

3 The academic area extension to SWD certification requires . . .

- 18 semester hours in the content area of the extension
- the Content Specialty Test in the subject of the Extension
- Collaboration with a certified general education content specialist weekly
- Co-teaching with a certified general education content specialist monthly

Note: For teachers employed by a school enumerated in Article 81, 85, 87, 88 or 89 of the Education Law or a special act school district as defined in Subdivision 8 of Section 4001 of the Education Law, that cannot meet the requirements of this subdivision, the school shall submit an alternate plan to the NYSED.

ATTACHMENT C: SED Guidance for BEDS Reporting

Examples for Reporting Primary and Special Education Instructors in Course Instructor Assignment

Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher	Certification Required	
General Education Classroom	Specified Content Area- 7-12 (i.e. Math, ELA, Social Studies, etc.)	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 7-12 or 5-9* 	
Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Certification Required
Special Class Teacher (Self-Contained Classroom)	Specified Content Area- 7-12 (i.e. Math, ELA, Social Studies, etc.)	The Primary Teacher and Special Education Teacher are the same teacher. Both indicators must be indicated with a Y.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 7-12 and SWD 7-12; or Content area 5-9* and SWD 5-9; or SWD (content area) 7-12; or SWD (content area) 5-9* ; or Certificate in SWD Generalist 7-12 and content area 7-12 extension; or SWD Generalist 5-9 and content area 5-9 extension*; or K-12 Special Education
Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Certification Required
Co-Teaching (both teachers are general education teachers) No students that require a SWD teacher	Specified Content Area- 7-12 (i.e. Math, ELA, Social Studies, etc.)	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 7-12 or 5-9*
		Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 7-12 or 5-9*

Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Certification Required
Co-Teaching		Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 7-12 or 5-9*
			Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 7-12 and SWD 7-12; or Generalist 7-12; or
Includes students that require a SWD teacher	Specified Content Area- 7-12 (i.e. Math, ELA, Social Studies, etc.)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content area 5-9* and SWD 5-9; or SWD (content area) 7-12; or SWD (content area) 5-9* ; or SWD Generalist 7-12 and content area 7-12 Extension; or SWD Generalist 5-9 and content area 5-9 extension*; or K-12 Special Education; or SWD Generalist 7-12; or SWD 5-9 Generalist* <p>Any teacher that holds a SWD 7-12 certificate and the content area certificate is appropriately certified to teach the course in this scenario.</p>
Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher		Certification Required
General Education Classroom	Elementary- 1-6 (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childhood Education (Common Branch): or Early Childhood B – Grade 2; or 5-9 Generalist*
Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Certification Required
Self-Contained Classroom	Elementary- 1-6 (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)	The Primary Teacher and Special Education Teacher are the same teacher. Both indicators must be indicated with a Y.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-12 Special Education; or SWD (Birth- Grade 2)*; or SWD (Grades 1-6); or SWD Generalist (Grades 5-9)*; or SWD (content area) 5-9

Classroom Scenario	Course	Primary Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Certification Required
Co-Teaching	Elementary- 1-6 (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)	Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childhood Education (Common Branch, N-6, K-6, PreK - 6); or Early Childhood, B-Grade 2*; or 5-9 Generalist*
			Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> K-12 Special Education; or SWD (Birth- Grade 2)*- where grade appropriate; or
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWD (Grades 1-6); or SWD Generalist (Grades 5-9)**; or SWD (content area) 5-9*

*** These teachers must be certified for the grade level they are teaching.**

A special class is a class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similar individual needs so that they can receive specially designed instruction. In special classes, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction is adapted to ensure the student has access to the general curriculum and the opportunity to meet the educational standards that apply to all students. Special Class Services serve students with disabilities whose needs cannot be met within a general education class, even with the use of supplementary aids and services.

4/21/2017

ATTACHMENT D: Examples of SED Search Requirements

Figure 1: Search Requirements for Subject Area Extension

Search Certification Requirements

"Search Certification Requirements" is an online search feature that allows you to identify the specific requirements you must meet for any given certificate. Please make your selections and click search.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search Certification Requirements" with a green header. Below the header, the text reads "Select Your Certificate Title by choosing from the dropdowns below". There are five dropdown menus:

- Select an Area of Interest:** Classroom Teacher Extensions
- Select a Subject Area:** Mathematics
- Select a Grade Level:** Adolescent - Grades 7-12
- Select a Title:** Students With Disabilities - Mathematics (Grades 7-12)
- Select a Type of Certificate:** Professional Ext/Anno

Figure 2: Search Requirements for Grade Level Extension

Search Certification Requirements

"Search Certification Requirements" is an online search feature that allows you to identify the specific requirements you must meet for any given certificate. Please make your selections and click search.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search Certification Requirements" with a green header. Below the header, the text reads "Select Your Certificate Title by choosing from the dropdowns below". There are five dropdown menus:

- Select an Area of Interest:** Classroom Teacher Extensions
- Select a Subject Area:** Students With Disabilities
- Select a Grade Level:** Grades 3-4
- Select a Title:** Students With Disabilities (Grades 3-4) Extension
- Select a Type of Certificate:** Professional Ext/Anno

At the bottom right of the form, there are two buttons: "Search" and "Clear".

Figure 3: Search Requirements for SOCE

Search Certification Requirements

"Search Certification Requirements" is an online search feature that allows you to identify the specific requirements you must meet for any given certificate. Please make your selections and click search.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Search Certification Requirements" with a green header. Below the header, the text reads "Select Your Certificate Title by choosing from the dropdowns below". There are five dropdown menus:

- Select an Area of Interest:** Statements of Continued Eligibility and Limited Extensions
- Select a Subject Area:** Mathematics
- Select a Grade Level:** Adolescent - Grades 7-12
- Select a Title:** Mathematics - Special Class
- Select a Type of Certificate:** SOCE

At the bottom right of the form, there are two buttons: "Search" and "Clear".