Thank you for the opportunity to share several recommendations of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) and its statewide membership on proposed changes to regulations concerning teacher preparation and certification. We deeply appreciate the work of the Department in its attempt to strengthen the criteria by which individuals can become educators – whether at the point of entry to the teaching profession or at certification.

NJPSA also appreciates the flexibility that has been built into the proposal with regard to a “blend” of grade point average / PRAXIS score. We believe this flexibility is essential to ensuring our schools attract a diverse educational workforce.

NJPSA believes these changes are a good first step, and look forward to working with the Department and the community of colleges and universities as we explore ways to ensure that those entering the classroom as novice educators are prepared to meet the challenges of teaching students in the twenty-first century.

While this proposal heightens the requirements for entry to the profession, we implore the Department and other stakeholders, including our friends in higher education, to explore what knowledge and skills an aspiring educator needs to successfully enter the teaching profession. **NJPSA believes this must be an ongoing dynamic dialogue between all stakeholder groups about program content and requirements is needed** and we encourage the Department to serve as a leader in this discussion.

Beyond this fundamental need, NJPSA also makes the following recommendations on the code proposal before us today:

**Ramping Up to Implementation**

While appreciative of Department attempts to ensure that those with exceptional educational credentials are entering New Jersey schools as teachers, NJPSA is concerned that the aggressive timeline articulated may needlessly jeopardize the intent of some individuals to complete teacher preparation degree programs. As such, we recommend the timeline for implementation be expanded, particularly with regard to the September 2014 requirement for acquisition of a certificate of eligibility (CE) / certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS).

Current juniors pursuing certification would be required to obtain a 3.0 as of September 2014 to gain admission to the profession. These individuals moved through their teacher preparation program with an expectation that the grade point average for entry to the profession was a
2.75. Satisfactorily modifying that average by 0.25 may be difficult to accomplish in a single year. As such, we would urge this deadline be moved back to reflect the “Cohort average entrance requirement” of September 2015. Such a change is equitable as it provides adequate notice to aspiring teachers in order to make appropriate changes in their coursework to satisfy the new requirement while not disadvantaging those who are unable to accomplish such a change in the time afforded.

Providing Particularity to the Performance Assessment
NJPSA also appreciates the introduction of a “performance assessment” for those seeking a CEAS. However, we would urge the State to provide additional specificity within regulation as to this assessment. Moreover, we believe the State Board should have an active role in decision making around acceptance of an assessment, as well as the required score to obtain certification – akin to the current process associated with acceptance of the PRAXIS. This will ensure transparency around implementation and ongoing operationalization of the requirement.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the concerns and recommendations of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. We look forward to working with the Board and the Department on this proposal in the coming weeks and months.