

You & Your Certificate



**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
EXCHANGE**

PSEA PENNSYLVANIA
STATE EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION
The Power of a Great Education

Forward

Almost all professions require the issuance of a license acknowledging the completion of certain professional studies and experiences. Education is no exception. In every state and U.S. territory and in many foreign countries, teachers and other education personnel are required by law to obtain a qualifying credential. In Pennsylvania we call it *certification*; in some states it is referred to as a license. While all jurisdictions in the U.S. require the licensing of basic education professional personnel, those required to hold it and the qualifications and standards of preparation needed to procure it may vary among states. In fact, the most consistent feature about state educational certification qualifications has been its variability. In the past decade, however, states have begun to work together to make certification more adaptable to educator mobility and local need.

It is imperative that teachers and educational specialists (non-instructional, certified personnel) have a practical working knowledge of the state's certification regulations and their relationship to employment and marketability. A certificate offers its holder certain rights and demands certain responsibilities in return. For PSEA members, *You and Your Certificate* is intended to be a handy reference to help understand these rights and responsibilities. Information about acquiring and maintaining an active and valid Pennsylvania certificate is offered here in an easy-to-use format. To expedite navigation of this document, please click on the BOOKMARKS tab to your left.

PSEA, the Professional Learning Exchange of the Division of Education Services and the IPD Council hope you find this manual useful. Any suggestions for additional content should be addressed to:

Education Services Department
Pennsylvania State Education Association
P.O. Box 1724
400 North Third Street
Harrisburg, PA 17105-1724





DEFINITIONS

Definitions

Act 48 — Continuing Professional Education Requirement

Act 48, effective July 1, 2000, is a law that mandates all Pennsylvania certified educators to maintain an active certificate through continuing professional education activities. Anyone holding an Intern, Instructional I or II, Educational Specialist I or II, Administrative, Supervisory, Letter of Eligibility and all vocational certificates is affected by Act 48.

NOTE: Act 48 continuing professional education requirements have been suspended until July 1, 2013. During the suspension, certificate holders will not be required to complete continuing professional education credit hours. At the end of the suspension, all certificate holders will have the same number of years to complete their credit hours as they had when the suspension began on August 29, 2011. Certificate holders may continue to complete credit hours during the suspension, and all credit hours earned during the suspension will be credited to the certificate holder's Act 48 record.

Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality

The administrative unit within the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) responsible to oversee compliance with laws, regulations, and administrative standards and policies surrounding the preparation, certification and staffing assignments of professional educator personnel in the public school entities of Pennsylvania.

Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Certification qualifications and application status: 717-787-3356

Approved preparation programs: 717-787-3470

Certificates held and date of issuance (Social security number needed to access this service): <https://www.tcs.ed.state.pa.us>

Fax: 717-783-6736

TDD: 717-772-2864

Website: www.education.state.pa.us



Calendar Time

Calendar time refers to chronological time. In Pennsylvania, intern certificates and various non-standard issuances called *permits* have life times usually of one to three calendar years duration and have either limited renewability or none at all. In addition, continuing professional education requirements must be met every five calendar years.



Chapter 4, Curriculum, 22 Pennsylvania Code § 4.1 et seq.

Regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education governing curriculum, assessment and graduation requirements for regular and vocational education students in public schools.

Chapter 49, Certification, 22 Pennsylvania Code § 49.1 et seq.

Regulations of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education governing preparation and certification of professional education personnel.

Chapter 354, General Standards for the Preparation of Professional Educators §354.1 et seq.

General Standards governing educator preparation programs in Pennsylvania.

Certification Staffing Policies and Guidelines (CSPGs)

CSPGs are published Department of Education policies advising school entities on how to comply with laws and regulations relating to certification and staffing assignments. The CSPGs do not, at present, constitute law or regulations themselves but do represent the Department's positions regarding the intent of law and regulation concerning the proper deployment of professionally certified staff members and the scope of the certificates they hold. They are frequently used by the Department to determine the validity of certification audit citations conducted by the Auditor General's office and therefore have more "authority" than normally attributed to "guidelines."

Conversion

Refers to the requirement of having to change the status of a certificate within a stated period of service time from Level I to Level II.

Endorsement

This is the type/subject area that appears on the face of your certificate. For example, Instructional/Social Science; Instructional/Office Technologies; Instructional/English; Educational Specialist/School Nurse; Educational Specialist/Home and School Visitor; Administrative/ Elementary Principal; Supervisory/Curriculum and Instruction, etc. The CSPG's (see above) describe in detail what endorsement is necessary for which school assignments or, conversely, what assignments are within the scope of a specific certificate.

Graduate Credit

Graduate-level credit awarded by a state-approved graduate degree-granting institution.

In-service

Describes post certification status. It is a term commonly used to refer to continuing professional education activities.

In-service Credit

PDE approved professional development credit applicable to meeting state requirements to maintain a valid and/or active certificate and/or to satisfy 18 of the 36 graduate credits required for a Letter of Equivalency (formerly called Master's Equivalency certificate).

Interstate Certification Agreement

Pennsylvania participates in an agreement with other states/jurisdictions based on mutually agreed-upon conditions that allows out of state certificate holders to obtain a Pennsylvania certificate. Please note this is not true reciprocity and it depends on how another state's criteria for certification compares with Pennsylvania. Applicants may need additional coursework, and candidates for Pennsylvania certification must complete the Praxis tests required in Pennsylvania.

Level I Certification

The initial standard certificate issued to those who complete an approved teacher preparation or educational specialist program and achieve the certification testing standards mandated by *Chapter 49*, of 22 Pennsylvania Code established by the State Board of Education. Both teachers and educational specialists are issued Level I certificates.

Level II Certification

Certification achieved by satisfying the education, service years, induction, performance evaluation with PDE approved evaluation forms and assessment requirements set forth in *Chapter 49* of 22 Pennsylvania Code by the State Board of Education. The assessment requirements are found in the State Board Regulations and affect Instructional and Educational Specialist Level I holders.

Long-Term Substitute

Person (holding a standard certificate or an emergency permit) who is employed as a substitute for fifteen (15) or more **consecutive** days in a **single** assignment.





NCLB-Highly Qualified

This definition applies only to teachers teaching English, Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, Science, Foreign Languages, Civics/Government, Economics, Arts, History, and Geography. To satisfy the definition of a Highly Qualified Teacher, teachers must:

- 1) Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
- 2) Hold a valid Pennsylvania teaching certificate (i.e., Instructional I, Instructional II or Intern certificate but not an emergency permit); **and**
- 3) Demonstrate subject matter competency for the core content area they teach.

Generally, all Pennsylvania certified teachers may demonstrate subject matter competency through having passed a content area test in the subject area of their teaching assignment. Middle and Secondary level teachers may also demonstrate competency by having completed a content area major or a graduate degree in the subject area of assignment.

Additionally, experienced teachers (i.e., one or more years of teaching experience) may demonstrate subject matter competency through having attained National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification in the subject area of their teaching assignment.

Note: PA's HOUSSE procedures (i.e. Bridge Certification Program, State-level HOUSSE and HOUSSE HQT designations) closed on July 2006 and June 30, 2007 to all educators except for (1) educators who developed an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) prior to June 30, 2007 in conjunction with his/her school district have until December 31, 2008 to attain a highly qualified teacher designation and (2) new (first year) special education teachers who teach multiple core content subjects in middle level or secondary settings as provided for under the IDEA and NCLB have up to two years from the date of hire to demonstrate content expertise in the remaining core academic subject(s) they teach.

Official Transcripts

Unopened, sealed transcripts.

Pennsylvania Code

A set of codified state regulations that carries the force of law.

Pennsylvania Department of Education

The administrative agency in charge of overseeing compliance to educational statutes and regulations in the Commonwealth. PDE is not a constitutionally authorized agency but part of the executive branch of state government. Its chief executive officer is the secretary who is appointed by the governor with concurrence of the senate and serves as a member of the governor's cabinet.



Pennsylvania General Assembly

Comprised of two houses: the House of Representatives, whose members are elected every two years; and the Senate, whose members are elected for four year terms. The Pennsylvania legislature has been given the responsibility by the state constitution to “provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”

Per Diem Substitute (Day-to-Day)

Person (holding a standard certificate or an emergency permit) employed on an intermittent basis whose service does **not** exceed fifteen (15) consecutive days in a single assignment.

Permanent Certification

The Level II certificate achieved by meeting professional development, service, induction, and evaluation requirements as established by law or regulation.

Preservice

The period of preparation time prior to initial certification.

Professional Employee

An employee who has been awarded tenure status as a result of completing established state requirements during service as a temporary professional employee.

Professional Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC)

A state commission, established by law, formed principally to advise PDE and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education on matters related to the preparation and certification of educators and to adjudicate cases involving alleged misconduct by certificate holders. Its members are appointed by the governor and approved by the senate. PSPC has a majority of teacher members.

Program-Approval Standards

The Department of Education approves Pennsylvania’s educator preparation programs based on sets of general and specific standards called program-approval standards established by PDE and approved by the State Board of Education. These reflect the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for professional education certification.

Provisional Certification

Level I certification.

School Code of 1949

A compendium of most of the laws governing education in Pennsylvania.



Service Time

Time employed on a Pennsylvania-issued certificate in an approved Pennsylvania school entity relating to the education of Nursery through grade 12 students. The service time allotted to an Instructional Level I and Vocational Instructional Level I (teaching) and an Educational Specialist Level I (non-instructional, pupil personnel) is six years. Service time is calculated as the time spent actually practicing under the certificate and may not necessarily occur in a consecutive period of time. (CSPG #7 explains how PDE calculates time served).

State Board of Education

A Board, created by the General Assembly, consisting of 22 members that constitute a Council of Basic Education, a Council of Higher Education and the State Board for Vocational Education. Seventeen (17) members are appointed by the Governor, 4 from the General Assembly, and one non-voting, ex officio member who is Chair of the Professional Standards and Practices Commission. The Board has the power and duty to review and adopt regulations that govern educational policies and principles and establish standards governing the educational programs of the Commonwealth. The State Board of Education added non-voting student representation on the Board. This includes one student member and one student member-elect to be added to each of the Council of Basic Education (high school) and the Council of Higher Education (college).

Substitute Teacher

A person holding a standard certificate or emergency permit employed to fill a position held by a temporary professional or professional employee on a temporary leave of absence because of illness, sabbatical leave, maternity leave, administrative leave, or suspension of service.

Temporary Professional Employee

A Level I, Level II, or intern certificate holders contracted as an employee to serve in a vacancy created as a new position or by the resignation, termination, retirement, or death of an incumbent. The status remains temporary until the employee is awarded tenure status in accordance with law, normally three years of successful practice as a temporary professional employee.

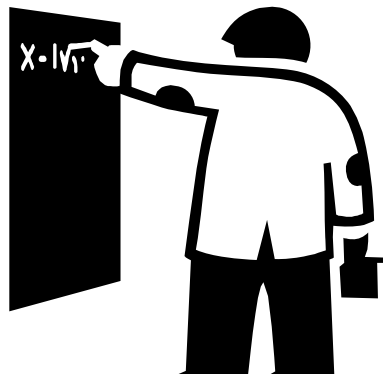
Tenure

The status of being a professional employee. Tenure is not related to professional certification except that all temporary professional and professional employees must hold the proper credentials (certificate) for the position to which they are assigned.

To gain tenure, an employee must:

- Serve three years in a probationary capacity (i.e., a “temporary professional employee”);
- Acquire three years’ service with satisfactory ratings, including a satisfactory rating within the last four months of the third year; and
- Maintain the certificate appropriate for “temporary professional employee” status.

Once tenure is obtained, it is good for the life of a career. Changing employment to another district does not negate tenure.





QUESTIONS/ANSWERS



General Information

1. Who issues professional educator certificates in Pennsylvania?

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality.

2. How can I contact this agency?

Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality

Pennsylvania Department of Education

333 Market Street

Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

For Application Information: 717-787-3356

For Approved Program Information: 717-787-3470; TDD: 717-772-2864

Fax: 717-783-6736

Website: www.education.state.pa.us

3. What do I do if I lose my certificate?

If you lose your certificate, you can order a duplicate. Forms are available at any school district, IU, AVTS, or through the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality. A processing fee is charged to process a duplicate certificate request.

[Request for Duplicate Certificate](#)

4. I want my name changed on my certificate. How can I do that?

If your name has been legally changed for any reason, you may request a name change. Forms are available from any school district, IU, AVTS, or through the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality. There is no fee charged for this service.

[Request for Name Change](#)

5. I recently moved. Who do I contact to report the change?

It is your responsibility to contact the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality in writing to report a change to your permanent address. Failure to do so may result in not receiving pertinent information. Forms are available online through the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality. There is no fee charged for this service. [Notification of Address Change](#)

6. What do I do if I want to delete an endorsement area on my certificate?

Annually, between October 1 and December 31, any holder of a standard Pennsylvania certificate may request and the Department of Education will grant the following June 30, the deletion of any endorsement area when either of the following conditions is met:

- a. The applicant has possessed a certificate endorsed in the area for which deletion is sought for at least ten (10) years and has not taught in that area during that time; or
- b. The applicant is not a regularly employed full-time professional or temporary professional employee of a public school entity as determined by the local school entity.

Note: Once an endorsement is deleted, the only way it can be reinstated is to enroll in a current preparation program and meet all the educational and noneducational requirements for current certification. [CSPG 12 – Voluntary Deletion of Areas of Certification](#)

7. If I have a police record, can I be certified in Pennsylvania?

One of the non-educational legal requirements for certification in Pennsylvania is the “good moral character” provision (School Code §1209). Having a police record may not, in and of itself, preclude certification issuance, but will necessitate close scrutiny by the Department of Education for such factors as the nature of the violation(s), the applicant’s age at the time of the violation(s), and the personal record of performance and achievement following the violation(s). The health and welfare of public school students will be the determining standard as to whether to issue or not. If denied, the applicant has the right to appeal.

8 In what ways could I lose my credentials to teach in Pennsylvania’s public schools?

- a. Action can be taken against a certificate holder for cause (including incompetence, negligence, immorality, intemperance, and cruelty) and/or for crimes of moral turpitude in accordance with the authority vested with the [Professional Standards and Practices Commission](#) (PSPC) by the Teacher Certification Law (24 P.S. §§2070.1-2070.18).
- b. Failure to convert a level I certificate to a level II certificate within six (6) service years will render the certificate invalid. Individuals may not teach with an invalid certificate. To have the certificate reinstated as valid, all requirements for conversion to a level II certification must be met and application must be made to PDE.
- c. Failure to complete 180 credit hours of continuing professional education every 5 calendar years will render the certificate inactive. Individuals with an inactive certificate may only serve as a day-to-day substitute for up to 90 days per year. To reactivate the certificate, an individual must complete the necessary credit hours. (See Maintaining a Valid and Active Certificate.)

9. Am I entitled to due process in the event an action is taken against my certificate?

Yes. The law requires the department to give certificate holders notice and the opportunity for a hearing before revoking a certificate (24 P.S. §2070.9).

10. What are my options of appeal if the Department of Education or my preparing college or university refuses to approve me for certification?

22 Pennsylvania Code §49.13 (b)(9) provides for any applicant denied certification the right of appeal. If the institution denies approving you for certification, an appeal should be registered in accordance with the institution's official appeal procedure. If the Department of Education denies approving you for certification, you may appeal to the Secretary's Certification Appeal Committee. All inquiries concerning these processes need to be made directly to the preparing institution or the Department of Education.

11. Who is responsible to identify the types, categories (endorsement areas), and standards of preparation for Pennsylvania certification?

The State Board of Education identifies the types of certificates required in Pennsylvania (instructional, educational specialist, supervisory, administrative, etc.). The Department of Education with the concurrence of the State Board of Education and the input of the Pennsylvania Standards and Practices Commission (PSPC) will determine the categories or specific endorsement areas and the standards of preparation leading to certification in these areas.

12. What is meant by “alternate route certification”?

Alternate route certification is a term used by many states and public policymakers to describe non-traditional entry into education certification. Alternate entry usually applies to those with college degrees who are interested in making a career change into education but do not wish to return full-time to college and/or take courses in the subject that may have been taken as part of the original baccalaureate. (See *Types of Certificates Issued*.) More detailed information on the types of alternate routes to certification in Pennsylvania can be obtained on PDE's website.

13. What does *Level* mean in reference to Pennsylvania certification?

Pennsylvania has had a two-tiered certification system for many years for Instructional and Educational Specialists. Initial or entry level certificates are called Level I. They have a limited life of service time and must be “converted” to a Level II before that time expires. Out-of-state candidates, whether they have experience or not, must begin with a Pennsylvania initial Level I credential.



14. Are certificate endorsement areas the same from one state to another?

No. Certificates may differ in endorsement area and/or in the range of grades applicable to those areas. For example, some states issue one comprehensive science certificate; Pennsylvania issues five separate science certificates. In Pennsylvania, a certificate in music covers grades K-12 and includes both instrumental and choral music. Some jurisdictions have K-6 choral music certificates and separate K-6 instrumental music certificates. When such differences occur, states cannot agree to reciprocal arrangements since the preparation standards for the certificates differ significantly.

15. What Instructional certificate endorsement areas are available in Pennsylvania?

Currently, Pennsylvania issues several Instructional certificates:

- Early Childhood (grades N-3)
- Elementary (grades K-6)
- Middle Level (English, Math, Science, Social Studies grades 7-9)
- Secondary (grades 7-12 with content area)
- Specialized Areas (grades K-12)
- Special Education (grades N-12)

New certification areas for Instructional certificates will be effective January 1, 2013. These areas are:

- Early Childhood (grades PK-4)
- Elementary/Middle (grades 4-8)
- Secondary (grades 7-12 with content area)
- Specialized Areas (grades PK-12)
- Special Education PK-8 with dual certification in early childhood, elementary/middle, or reading specialist
- Special Education 7-12 with dual certification in Secondary content area(s) or reading specialist

Approved certification preparation programs have been notified of the changes and should be working to ensure that individuals graduating from the programs after January 1, 2013 meet all necessary requirements for the new certification areas.¹

16. In addition to having the certificate, are there any other requirements for employment?

Yes. A criminal background check and a child abuse clearance are both required for employment in Pennsylvania schools. PDE's Background Clearance Page

¹ For additional information regarding the new Instructional areas and adding new content areas to existing certificates after Jan. 1, 2013, please see PSEA's Instructional Certificate Update Advisory released in November 2011. The Advisory can be found on PSEA's website under Publications.

Can a non-U.S. citizen be certified to teach in Pennsylvania?

With conditions, yes. By law (School Code §1202), all standard certificate holders must be U.S. citizens. However, a foreign national may apply and be granted an *Alien Provisional* certificate good for six calendar years. The *Alien Provisional* is issued to a foreign national who is legally authorized to reside permanently and seek employment in the U.S. and has filed a declaration to become a U.S. citizen. This certificate is converted to a standard certificate upon receiving official citizenship status. Failure to acquire such status within the six-year life span of the *Alien Provisional* certificate will result in the candidate's inability to legally continue employment. There are no exceptions. (See *Interstate Reciprocity*.) CSPG 6 – Alien Provisional Certification



Types of and Qualifications for Certificates

1. What are the standard certificates issued for professional educators in Pennsylvania?


- **Instructional Certificates or Intern Certificates** are issued to persons whose primary responsibility shall be direct contact with learners in teaching and learning situations.
- **Educational Specialist Certificates** are issued to persons whose primary responsibility shall be to render professional service other than classroom teaching.
- **Supervisory Certificates** are issued to persons whose primary responsibility shall be to supervise educational programs and direct the activities of professional and nonprofessional employees in such programs.
- **Administrative Certificates** are issued to persons whose primary responsibility shall be to direct, operate, supervise and administer the organizational and general activities of a school.
- **Vocational Instruction or Vocational Intern Certificates** are issued to persons whose primary responsibility is vocational instruction within occupational/technical curricula.
- Additionally, there is a category of school employees known as **Licensed Professionals**, individuals who work in school settings and are required to hold a license issued by the Commonwealth (e.g. School Social Worker).

2. How do I qualify for a Regular Education Intern certificate?

Candidates must:

- Hold a baccalaureate degree related to the area of certification sought and a minimum 3.0 GPA in their baccalaureate degree².
- Have 6 credits of college level Mathematics and 6 credits of college level English Literature and Composition.
- Apply and be accepted into a state-approved intern program at an institution of higher education.
- Take and pass all required Praxis tests.
- Maintain continuous enrollment in a teacher-intern program.

² Candidates who have taken and passed the Praxis I – Pre-Professional Skills Tests-- Reading, Writing, and Math, may enter with a 2.8 GPA.



The candidate has three calendar years in which to complete the necessary course work and experiences. Should the intern obtain employment with a school entity, the intern will be considered a temporary professional employee. An Intern Certificate cannot be renewed.

3. How do I qualify for an Instructional I or Educational Specialist I certificate?

Candidates for an Instructional I or Educational Specialist I certificate must:

- Complete an approved preparation program at the bachelor or graduate level.³
- Receive the recommendation of the preparing institution.
- Take and pass all required tests (Praxis tests).
- Meet all other non-educational requirements established by law and/or regulation.

4. How do I qualify for an Instructional II or Educational Specialist II certificate?

In order to apply for an Instructional II or Educational Specialist II certification, individuals must:

- Complete a minimum of three (3) years successful teaching/service on a Pennsylvania Instructional I or Educational Specialist I in a position appropriate to their certification. "Successful" is determined using PDE form 427 and 427A.
- Accrue 24 post-baccalaureate credits. Unless all post-baccalaureate credits were earned before September 1, 2011, six (6) of these credits must be in Inclusive Classrooms or Standards Aligned Systems (SAS). See CSPG No. 7 issued on June 1, 2010 for details.
- Complete a Department-approved induction program.

5. How do I qualify for a Vocational Education Intern certificate?

Candidates must:

- Apply and be accepted into a state-approved, vocational-teacher preparation program.
- Take and pass the appropriate occupational competency examination.
- Procure the preparing institution's recommendation for Vocational Intern Certification.
- Meet all other requirements provided by law.

The Vocational Intern Certificate is a three-year, non-renewable certificate. The Intern certificate holder shall be eligible for a Vocational Instructional I upon meeting the qualifications described above for the Vocational Instructional I certification including receiving the recommendation of the preparing institution.

³New credit requirements for individuals graduating from an approved preparation program became effective January 1, 2011. These requirements include:

- Nine (9) credits or 270 hours in Accommodations and Adaptations for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings
- Three (3) credits or 90 hours in Instructional Needs of English Language Learners

Approved certification preparation programs have been notified of the changes and should be working to ensure that individuals graduating from the programs after January 1, 2011 meet all necessary requirements.

6. How do I qualify for a Vocational Education Instructional I certificate?

Candidates must:

- Have a minimum of two (2) years wage-earning experience.
- Take and pass the occupational competency examination.
- Complete 18 credit hours in an approved program of vocational teacher education.
- Take and pass the required Praxis I tests.
- Meet all other requirements established by law.

7. How do I qualify for a Vocational Education Instructional II certificate?

Candidates must:

- Complete three (3) years of satisfactory teaching on a Pennsylvania Vocational Instructional I in a position appropriate to the certificate.
- Complete a total of 60 credit hours in an approved program in the appropriate field of vocational education. As of January 1, 2013, six (6) of these credits must be in Accommodations and Adaptations for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings and three (3) of these credits must be in Instructional Needs of English Language Learners.
- Take and pass a test of professional knowledge and vocational general knowledge.
- Complete a Department-approved induction program.

8. How do I qualify as a Licensed Professional?

Currently, the only staff assignment within the Licensed Professionals category is School Social Worker. In order to qualify as a School Social Worker, an individual must hold and maintain a current license as a social worker (LSW) or licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) issued by the Pennsylvania Department of State. Individuals who were hired as School Social Workers before September 2008 may continue in this capacity. CSPG 201 contains additional information about the School Social Worker assignment. School Social Worker has been removed from the Home and School Visitor assignment (CSPG 77).

9. What is an Emergency Permit?

An *Emergency Permit* is issued by PDE for service in public schools at the request of the school entity to an applicant who is a graduate of a four-year college or university employed to fill a professional vacancy when a fully qualified and properly certificated applicant is not available. The school district must apply for the permit on behalf of the individual candidate. An Emergency Permit is issued under the terms and conditions agreed to between the requesting public school entity and the Department of Education.

(22 Pennsylvania Code, § 49.31).

10. What is the lifespan of an Emergency Permit?

An Emergency Permit is good for one school year, including summer school. Under certain circumstances, it can be renewed yearly at the discretion of the Bureau of Teacher Education and Preparation.

11. What is a Temporary Permit?

In cases where the candidate has met all requirements for certification, including tests and GPA, but does not have the requisite 6 credits of math and 6 credits of English, Pennsylvania may issue a Temporary Teaching Permit, valid for one calendar year.

12. What is a Letter of Equivalency?

The *Letter of Equivalency* is issued for pay purposes only. It represents an accumulation of credits but does not involve a formal graduate training program that would lead to a degree. The Letter of Equivalency is strictly a Pennsylvania issuance and is not transferable to any other state. The Letter of Equivalency is not an academic substitute for a bona fide Baccalaureate or Master's Degree. It is issued to applicants holding a valid Instructional I, II, Educational Specialist I, II, or a Vocational Instructional I or II. A grade of "C" or better is required in college and university courses and a letter of satisfactory completion is necessary for all in-service courses applied to the attainment of the Letter of Equivalency. A total of 36 graduate level credits are required; minimum of 18 graduate level credits from a university or college; remainder can be earned by taking PDE-approved in-service courses.



Preparing for Certification

1. Who determines the standards for preparing for certification?

The State Board of Education sets general and program-specific standards for preparing institutions to apply in identifying their courses and experiences for students and for managing and coordinating their programs between the Education and Arts and Sciences Departments. The Department's Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality is charged to oversee compliance. See *Chapter 354* of 22 Pennsylvania Code for qualifying standards for entry in and exit out of preparation programs.

2. Can any post secondary institution prepare students for certification in Pennsylvania?

No. Preparing institutions must be approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to conduct preparatory programs in specific certification areas.

3. What is preservice?

Preservice is the training and study undertaken to achieve educator certification or licensure. It is "pre" certification.

4. Who is the certifying officer?

The individual officially recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in each approved institution who has the authority to sign off on the certification applications of students. His or her signature attests to the fact the student has successfully completed the approved preparation program for certification. Every approved institution in Pennsylvania has a certifying officer.

5. How can I obtain a list of approved Pennsylvania educator preparation programs?

Information is available on the Certification Preparation Programs page on PDE's website or by calling the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality at 717-787-3470.

6. Should I be concerned about the accreditation of my preparing institution?

In order for the state to recognize your preparation credits, your institution must be approved by the Department of Education. While national accreditation is not required in Pennsylvania, some institutions are accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Colleges of Teacher Education (NCATE) or other accreditation organizations. The national certification may be a consideration by some employers although that is not a requirement in all jurisdictions.

7. **How can I determine what course work is needed to add another endorsement area to my certificate?**

Contact the college or university of your choice and make sure it is approved to conduct a preparing program in the endorsement area you seek. You will be assigned an advisor who will counsel you as to the course work required. Whether you are adding another endorsement or seeking a different certificate type (e.g. Supervisory or Administrative), the process is the same.

While the state sets standards for preparation, the institutions have some autonomy in how they meet those standards so requirements may vary from institution to institution. It is always wise to shop around.



Worth Noting

In 2007, a student teacher at Millersville University was denied a teaching certificate because of a picture posted on a MySpace page. The individual's moral character was called into question. The student filed a suit in federal court, and the court agreed that granting institutions have the right to withhold approval because of moral character considerations.

8. **Is it possible to complete an approved program and not receive a certificate?**

Yes. Institutions have the right to withhold approval of certification for a variety of outstanding fines, failing grades, poor performance, moral character considerations, etc.

It is important to note that in appealing an institution's decision to deny you certification, PDE is not held to the conclusion drawn by the institution. If, however, the Department also denies you, your only option is an appeal to Commonwealth court.

Making Initial Application

1. Where can I get certification application forms?⁴

Forms can be obtained from the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, from the school district, IU, AVTS personnel office, and from PDE's web site at www.pde.state.pa.us.

2. What are the steps involved in applying for a Level I certificate in Pennsylvania?

The *in-state* candidate is required to complete and submit an application form, accompanied by passing certification test scores, other pertinent documents as requested, and a fee to the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality. The application form *must* bear the signature of the certifying officer of the state-approved preparing institution attesting to the fact that the applicant has successfully completed the educational requirements mandated by the state and is approved by the institution for certification.

The *out-of-state* applicant must submit a completed application form, documentation showing that he/she has completed an approved preparation program or holds comparable certification to the one sought in Pennsylvania, official college transcripts, passing certification test scores, and other pertinent documentation as requested.

3. Is there a fee?

Yes. The state charges a processing fee for each certification application processed, whether it results in a certificate or not. Fees vary based on several factors. Check the fee schedule on PDE's website or contact the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality, 717-787-3356.

4. What are the educational requirements for obtaining Level I certification in Pennsylvania?

Certification applicants must have completed a state-approved preparation program, have minimally earned a baccalaureate degree (except for vocational candidates), and be approved for certification by the designated certifying officer of that institution.

Effective January 2011, all teacher education programs need to show evidence that they have included nine credits or 270 hours of special education and three credits or 90 hours of teaching English language learners into their programs.

5. What are the non-educational requirements for Level I certification in PA?

Candidates must be at least 18 years of age, of good moral character, provide a medical physician's certificate showing that duties can be performed with or without reasonable accommodation, and take and pass the required certification tests.

¹ Beginning in December 2011, applications for certification will be processed using the new Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). For more information about the transition to TIMS and procedures for applying for certification using the system, please refer to PSEA's TIMS Advisory issued in November 2011. The Advisory can be found on the PSEA website under Publications.

6. **What are the non-educational requirements in addition to the above for employment in a school district?**

Obtain a child abuse clearance and a criminal background clearance. These clearances are processed by the Pennsylvania State Police. Check for details on PDE's Background Clearance Page.

7. **I qualified for a certificate many years ago but did not apply to receive one. I want to apply now. Will I qualify under current regulations or under those in effect when I graduated?**

You must meet the regulation and policy requirements *in effect at the time of application*.

Remember

A Level I Certificate will not be issued until all qualifications are met as determined by the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality.

8. **I have a baccalaureate degree from a Pennsylvania college but did not complete a teacher preparation program. Can I qualify for certification?**

You qualify for certification by demonstrating you have successfully met the educational and non-educational requirements for professional certification at the time of application. A baccalaureate degree will probably not meet all of the educational qualifications required, particularly those related to pedagogy. PSEA recommends you identify approved preparing institutions in your area (see Preparing for Certification) and ask the certifying officers to review your background and prescribe what you need to meet the educational requirements for that institution's approval for certification. It is advisable to "shop around," if possible, since institutions may vary in what they will accept. You may also want to consider the Intern Permit (see Types and Qualifications of Certificates Issued).

9. **I am a resident of Pennsylvania but completed an out-of-state certification preparation program. Am I considered an in-state or out-of-state candidate?**

For certification purposes, you are considered an out-of-state candidate.

10. **What is the application procedure for adding new endorsements to my certificate?**

Candidates must complete an approved program of study, receive the approval of the preparing institution's certifying officer, take and pass the subject area test for the new endorsement area, and make application to the PDE.

Maintaining a Valid and Active Certificate

1. What is a valid certificate?

It is a certificate having an allotted period of usable time remaining on it. The period of validity can be either based on calendar time (Intern) or service time (Instructional I, Educational Specialist I).

2. What is an active certificate?

It is a certificate whose holder has satisfied the state's continuing professional education requirements.

3. Can a certificate be valid but inactive?

Yes. A certificate will be valid for a given span of time – six years of *service* time for a Level I and 99 years of time for a Level II. A certificate will be active for a maximum of five *calendar* years before having to be reactivated through an accumulation of continuing professional education requirements of six collegiate credits or six approved in-service credits or 180 approved activity hours or any combination of hours and credits. For calculation purposes, one credit is equal to 30 activity hours.

4. Can I work on either an invalid or inactive certificate?

You cannot work at all on an invalid certificate. You can substitute (day-to-day only) up to, but no more than, 90 days per school year on an inactive certificate. Retirees may substitute (day-to-day only) a cumulative 180 days on an inactive certificate.

5. How do I maintain a valid certificate?⁵

All teachers and specialists begin with a Level I certificate which has a life of six (6) *service* years after which it must be converted to a Level II. This is done by meeting certain state requirements:

- Three years (six semi-annual evaluations) of successful teaching attested to by a chief school administrator.
- Twenty-four additional post-baccalaureate credits. Unless all post baccalaureate credits were earned before September 1, 2011, six (6) of these credits must be in Inclusive Classrooms or Standards Aligned Systems (SAS). See CSPG No. 7 issued on June 1, 2010 for details.
- Completion of a Department-approved induction program.
- The State Board now also requires candidates to “present evidence of satisfactory achievement in assessments (PDE 427 evaluation) prescribed by PDE under §49.18 (a) of Chapter 49, 22 Pennsylvania Code.”



If you do not meet these requirements within the six-year service life of your Level I certificate, your license becomes invalid, making you ineligible for service. Once these obligations are met, the certificate becomes valid again and you may return to service.

6. Will service as a substitute teacher count as experience towards Level II conversion?

See the Creditable Service section below.

7. Will service outside my areas of certification count towards Level II conversion?

Service rendered in assignments for which a person lacks appropriate certification is not creditable toward meeting the experience requirement for permanent certification. Likewise, this time is not charged against the validity period of the provisional certificate. See the Creditable Service section below for additional information.

8. Will service at a private or nonpublic school count towards Level II conversion?

Service on a Level I certificate when performed within a licensed private school (PRRI's) approved by the Bureau of Special Education to provide educational services to a public school entity or the PDE is both creditable toward permanent certification and charged against the period of validity of the provisional certificate. The assignment must match the public school certification held. See the Creditable Service section below for additional information.

9. What service time is not creditable for Level II conversion?

Service in the following categories is not creditable toward permanent certification or charged against the period of validity of a provisional certificate.

- Intern Certificates (Instructional or Vocational)
- Temporary Teaching permits
- Approved leave of absence (maternity, medical, etc.)
- Time accrued outside the mandated school year (summer school)
- Emergency Permits
- Act 97 Waivers of Certification
- A teacher of adult classes of persons 21 years of age or older (non Bureau of Corrections facilities)
- Day-to-day substitutes
- Nonprofessional or paraprofessional positions
- Service outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

See the Creditable Service section below for additional information.

10. Are community college credits and continuing education units (CEUs) accepted for conversion credits? For meeting the continuing professional education requirements?

Community college credits and CEUs *cannot* be used to meet the requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate. Community college credits and CEUs *can* be used to meet the continuing professional education requirements of Act 48.

11. Must academic credits for Level II conversion be graduate level?

Credit may be either undergraduate or graduate level but must be post-baccalaureate credits from a four-year, degree-granting institution.

12. Are correspondence courses and courses taken as independent study acceptable for Level II conversion? For continuing professional education requirements?

They are applicable for Level II conversion. However, the credits must be earned at and appear as a passing grade on an official transcript of a state-approved, four-year bachelor's degree granting college.

Whether they can be applied to meeting the continuing professional education requirement depends on whether the agency or institution conducting them is a recognized provider approved by a local school entity or by the state.

13. Do Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) approved in-service credits count towards Level II certification? For professional education?

Yes, for both questions.

14. Will credits completed at a state-approved seminary/school of theology, medical school, and/or law school be acceptable for Level II certification?

Credits in the fields of law, medicine, real estate, and theology are not acceptable unless the certificate holder can satisfactorily demonstrate to the Department that these credits directly relate to the certificate held. It is best to obtain PDE clearance prior to taking such courses if you intend to use the credits to satisfy the 24 credit requirement for a Level II certificate.

15. I have more than one endorsement area on my provisional instructional certificate (Level I). Do I have to qualify to convert each endorsement area separately? Do I have to meet continuing professional education requirements for every certificate endorsement I hold?

No. The act of converting one endorsement area on the certificate converts all provisional endorsements that appear under that certificate type. Likewise, individuals who have multiple endorsement areas on their certificates need only meet the continuing professional education requirements once during the five-year calendar period – i.e. six collegiate credits or six continuing professional development credits or 180 activity hours or a combination of hours and credits.

16. What are the requirements to convert a Level I to a Level II certificate?

See #5 above.⁶

17. Can I renew a Level I certificate if I fail to meet the requirements in the allotted time?

No. However, once all requirements for conversion from a Level I certificate to a Level II certificate have been met, you can apply for a Level II certificate.

¹ Beginning in December 2011, applications for certification will be processed using the new Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). For more information about the transition to TIMS and procedures for applying for certification using the system, please refer to PSEA's TIMS Advisory issued in November 2011. The Advisory can be found on the PSEA website under Publications.

18. **Can I renew an Intern Permit if I fail to meet the requirements in the allotted time?**
No.

19. **Who determines if my certificate is valid and/or active?**
The Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality in the Department of Education.

20. **How do the requirements for a valid certificate differ from those for an active certificate?**
See #1 & #2 above.

21. **How do I maintain an active certificate?**

A holder of any type of Pennsylvania educator certificate is required by law (Act 48) to complete continuing professional education credit hours. **Everyone who holds a certificate issued by Pennsylvania is affected by Act 48 whether they are employed or not; whether they are retired or not; or whether they hold a provisional (Level I) or permanent (Level II) certificate.**

Those full-time tenured and non-tenured teachers in public school entities in Pennsylvania, including charter schools and their non-certified staffs, must meet the intent of Act 48 or forfeit the ability to work full-time.

Others who function as substitutes or who do not work full time for any reason have three options: (1) they may choose to maintain an active certificate by taking the requisite credits and/or activity hours; (2) they may voluntarily inactivate their certificates by completing an application and submitting it to PDE with a fee, or (3) they may let their certificates run out of active time. Whether they voluntarily inactivate their certificates or let them run out, they are able to substitute up to 90 days per year in the public schools. Those who voluntarily inactivate their certificates stop the clock so that their professional development obligations will not increase every five years but stay at the level they were when they inactivated their certificates.

See the section on Act 48 below for additional information.

NOTE: Act 48 continuing professional education requirements have been suspended until July 1, 2013. During the suspension, certificate holders will not be required to complete continuing professional education credit hours. At the end of the suspension, all certificate holders will have the same number of years to complete their credit hours as they had when the suspension began on August 29, 2011. Certificate holders may continue to complete credit hours during the suspension, and all credit hours earned during the suspension will be credited to the certificate holder's Act 48 record.

Notification to Certificate Holders

One year prior to the active period expiring on a certificate, the Department of Education is obligated by law to inform a certificate holder of the time remaining and the number of credits and/or activity hours accrued to date.

PDE has chosen to provide this notification electronically.

It is your responsibility to access PDE's Act 48 Reporting System to Monitor your progress and/or status.

22. How can I confirm that my certificate is still valid? Active?

Level I certificates are valid for years of service, not chronological years. If you stopped working or never worked on your Level I and therefore never used the six years designated service years, your certificate is still valid. To officially confirm the validity status of your certificate, call the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality at (717) 787-3356 and request a review of your work/school experience or ask your school district's office to conduct an unofficial assessment of your certificate's validity.

Act 48 requires the state to maintain records of every certificate holder's continuing professional education status. We recommend that everyone under Act 48 requirements should check their Act 48 status at least twice a year. You can do this by accessing the Act 48 Reporting System on PDE's website. You will be required to enter your Professional Personnel ID (PPI). First time visitors will need to apply for their PPI by entering their name, social security number and date of birth.

23. Can changes to rules and regulations governing certification validity and activity affect me even though I was awarded certification under a different set of policies?

If permitted by statute or regulation, yes. In the past, many changes in law, regulation, and/or Department policy grandfathered current certificate holders. However, Act 48, for example, did not. Thus, even though the state refers to the Level II certificate as "permanent," the fact is that it may be possible for new laws to change the requirements for maintaining your certificate

24. My Instructional I certificate says that it is valid for six years. I earned the certificate five years ago but taught only one year. Will my certificate expire at the end of this year?

No. Your Instructional I Certificate is good for six years of service, not six calendar years. The clock is only ticking when you are employed by a Pennsylvania public school entity. See above for additional information.

25. When is a certificate not usable for employment?

When it is invalid (time for conversion has expired) or when it is inactive (required professional development activities have not been accrued within a five-year calendar year time frame). An individual cannot work on an invalid certificate. However, one can substitute up to 90 days a year on an inactive certificate.



26. Where can I obtain information about in-service credits and/or PDE-approved continuing professional education activity hours?

Information about in-service credits needed to convert a Level I to a Level II or to satisfy the credit requirements for the *Letter of Equivalency* is available through your local intermediate unit or school personnel office. Approved activity hours to maintain an active certificate may be earned through PDE-approved providers, including PSEA. The Education Services Division of PSEA has a listing of PDEapproved PSEA professional development offerings. PDE also has information on its web site about its credit-bearing approved providers. PDE, through the Online Professional Education Network (OPEN), also provides free online courses.

27. If I work in an institution like a community college or a private licensed school where I am not required to have public school certification, am I using up service time on my certificate?

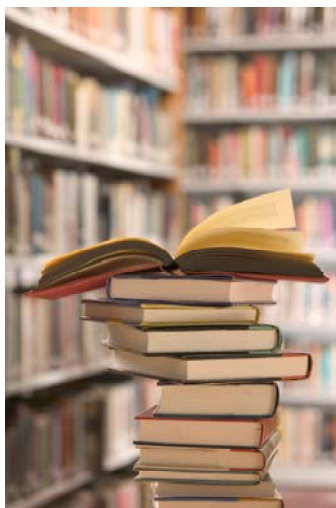
No. (See #8 above).

28. What are the consequences, if any, of accepting positions that do not require Pennsylvania certification?

You can only accrue the required experience time needed for certification conversion working in an appropriate capacity that requires official Pennsylvania state certification. At the same time, if a certificate is not required, you are not using any service time allotted to your certificate.

29. If I work in a position for which I do not hold the proper certification, will I jeopardize my certification status when seeking to convert my certificate?

Any experience in a public school accrued in an assignment for which you are not properly certified cannot be applied to meet the requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate. See above for additional information.



30. How do I add certification areas?

In most cases, adding a certification area to an existing **Instructional** certificate involves taking and passing the appropriate Praxis test(s) and completing form PDE 338 G.

For Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, Reading Specialist, Cooperative Ed, all Special Education areas, and Health and Physical Education, you must complete a preparation program and meeting all qualifications and requirements for certification. To add an instructional area for which there is not a qualifying score on the Praxis test, you must also complete a preparation program and meet all requirements for certification.

To add an Educational Specialist certification to an existing certificate, you must complete a preparation program and all requirements associated with obtaining that certificate.

31. What is required for a Master's Equivalency?

A Master's Equivalency, now known as a Letter of Equivalency for Master's Degree and Letter of Equivalency for Bachelor's Degree, is for salary purposes only.

A Letter of Equivalency for Master's Degree is issued to persons holding a valid Instructional I, Instructional II, Educational Specialist I, Educational Specialist II certificate or their equivalents, upon the accumulation of 36 hours of credit. A minimum of 18 academic graduate credits must be earned in the content area of the applicant's primary teaching assignment at a college or university approved to offer graduate work. A maximum of 18 of the credit requirement may be satisfied through in-service programs approved by the Secretary of Education for meeting master's equivalency requirements.

A Letter of Equivalency for Bachelor's Degree is also issued to holders of Vocational Instructional I, Vocational Instructional II or their equivalents upon the accumulation of 90 college credits. A minimum of 18 credit hours of the final 30 shall be earned at a state-approved baccalaureate degree-granting institution. The remaining 12 may be satisfied in full or in part, through in-service programs approved by the Secretary of Education for meeting bachelor's equivalency requirements.

PDE is strictly enforcing the credit requirements for a Master's Equivalency. If you are unsure if a course will meet the requirements for "content" credit for the certificate area and current assignment, you are strongly encouraged to submit an official course description from the college/university course catalog of the course in question to the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality. The course description should include the front of the catalog corresponding in year and semester to the course taken. You are encouraged to submit this information as soon as possible, as it may take several weeks for the Bureau to evaluate the course description.

See CSPG No. 10 for information regarding the requirements for a Letter of Equivalency.

Interstate Certification Agreements

1. What is an “interstate agreement”?

An interstate agreement between two certificate-issuing agencies means that they will mutually accept the other’s preparation standards (the educational requirements). While this agreement simplifies the certification process for out-of-state candidates, it is not a pure quid pro quo. Candidates must meet all requirements, including passing the certification tests and all other non-educational qualifications prescribed by the jurisdiction in which they seek certification.

Pennsylvania has agreements with many jurisdictions but only for teaching certificates and only for certificates that are comparable to the ones issued in this state.

Information on other state requirements can be obtained from the [National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification \(NASDTEC\)](#).



2. I have completed a preparation program in an out-of-state institution. How do I obtain a Pennsylvania certificate?

Contact the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality to determine if Pennsylvania has an interstate agreement with the state where you completed your preparation program. Remember that Pennsylvania currently has interstate agreements with a majority of states for regular education instructional or teaching certificates only.

3. What qualifies an individual trained out-of-state for certification in Pennsylvania?

The same qualifications must be met by out-of-state candidates as those met by in-state applicants. That is, the certification candidate must complete a state-approved preparation program, be approved by that institution for certification, pass the required certification tests and meet all other non-educational qualifications like age and moral character provisions.

4. **Why, as an experienced out-of-state teacher, must I begin in Pennsylvania with a Level I certificate?**

There is no provision in Pennsylvania law or regulation to permit anyone applying for initial certification in the state to waive the two-phase certification process and have the Level II conferred directly. It should be noted, however, that the State Board of Education's regulations in *Chapter 49* of the 22 Pennsylvania Code permit those candidates who hold National Board Certification to be issued a Level II if all other qualifications are met.

5. **May I teach in Pennsylvania if I am not a resident of the state?**

Yes. You must have appropriate Pennsylvania certification, however. You cannot teach on an out-of-state certificate in Pennsylvania at any time. Likewise, time teaching in another state will not count against the validity period of your Pennsylvania certificate.



Appropriate Use of Certified Personnel

1. **Who is responsible for assuring that the professional staff is properly credentialed and appropriately assigned based on the credentials they hold?**

It is the responsibility of the professional to know and understand the nature of the work permitted by the certification endorsements held. Additionally, the school district is responsible for deploying staff appropriately. Failure on the part of either party could result in loss of job for the teacher and/or a major fine for the district.

2. **What legal restrictions, if any, prevent an educational entity from assigning someone to a position inappropriate to the scope of the certificate held?** *Section 1202 of the School Code (law) mandates that educational professionals be certified for the work they are assigned. It is, therefore, a violation of law to work in a position for which a certificate exists and to not hold that particular certificate or an Emergency Permit. In cases where no certificate exists, any Level I or II certificate holder is appropriate. In addition, Chapter 235, Code of Conduct for Educators, 22 Pennsylvania Code § 235.7 prohibits either accepting or assigning employment that violates this law.*

3. **If I have been inappropriately assigned, can I use the time spent working in that improper assignment towards meeting the service year requirement for Level II conversion?**

No. (See *Maintaining a Valid and Active Certificate*, #7, #30, and #32.)

4. **Can I lose my job if I am inappropriately assigned?**

You might. Both the individual and the district have a responsibility to make sure that a person is not assigned, or knowingly accepts, a teaching assignment outside of his or her area of certification (*Section 24 PS 12-1202 of the School Code*). Job jeopardy becomes an issue if you knowingly accept, or are inappropriately assigned outside of your certification area, and the district does not have an assignment appropriate for your certificate. If no appropriate assignment is available, the district could furlough you until one does become available.

5. **Can I personally be fined by the state for working outside my certification area?**
No.

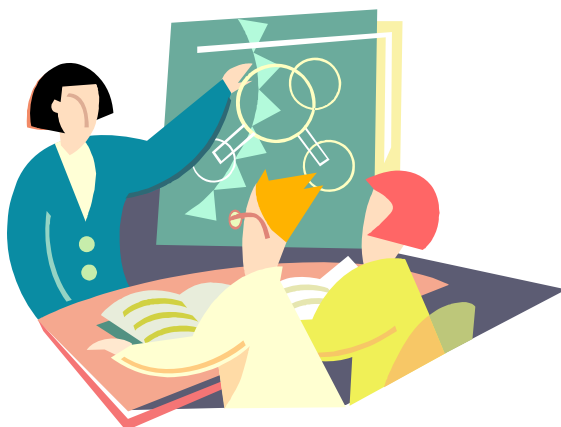


6. How can I be sure that the work I am employed to do is reserved for my certificate?

Request the district's human resources office to confirm this with the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality or call your UniServ office. It should be stated that the vast majority of educators are staffed appropriately.

7. What if I am asked to teach something for which no certificate exists?

In order to give more flexibility to districts to provide extensive learning opportunities for students, the state allows the staffing of courses for which no certificate presently exists by anyone holding a valid and active Level I or II certificate and who has, according to the district, any other requisite qualification for the position. Teachers so assigned will receive experience credit for teaching. The state also has the option of issuing the district a School Specialist certificate on behalf of the teacher. Either way, the teaching counts as service experience and may be used to convert a Level I to a Level II certificate.



Act 48: My Teaching Certificate States It's Good for 99 Years - What Happened?

PSEA receives many inquiries as to why Pennsylvania teachers now have to meet Act 48 Continuing Professional Education requirements in order to keep their certificates valid. In response to these inquiries, our Legal Division has researched this issue and provides the following insight.

My certificate says it's valid for 99 years. Can the state change the validity requirements?

Holders of professional licenses in any profession hold their licenses subject to reasonable rules and regulations. The courts have held consistently that it is reasonable to require professionals to engage in a program of mandatory continuing professional development. In fact, most professions in Pennsylvania and throughout the country are required to participate in such programs.

How do I maintain an active certificate?

A holder of any type of Pennsylvania educator certificate is required by law (Act 48) to complete continuing professional education. This is done through the accrual of collegiate credits, continuing professional development credits (IU), and/or activity hours or experiences. Everyone who holds a certificate issued by Pennsylvania is affected by Act 48 whether they are employed or not; whether they are retired or not; or whether they hold a provisional (Level I) or permanent (Level II) certificate.

Those full-time tenured and non-tenured teachers in public school entities in Pennsylvania, including charter schools and their non-certified staffs, must meet the requirements of Act 48 or forfeit the ability to work full-time.

Take Note:
State law requires PDE to inform a certificate holder of time remaining before expiration and the number of Act 48 credits accrued to date. PDE provides this information for each certificate holder on its website.

Others who function as substitutes or who do not work full time for any reason have three options: (1) they may choose to maintain an active certificate by taking the requisite credits and/or activity hours; (2) they may voluntarily inactivate their certificates by completing an application and submitting it to PDE with a fee, or (3) they may let their certificates run out of active time. Whether they voluntarily inactivate their certificates or let them run out, they are able to substitute up to 90 days per year in the public schools. Those who voluntarily inactivate their certificates stop the clock so that their professional development obligations will not increase every five years but stay at the level they were when they inactivated their certificates.

Maintaining an active certificate means accumulating one or a combination of the following:

- Six credits of collegiate studies, or
- Six credits of Department-approved in-service courses, or
- One hundred eighty hours of Department-approved continuing professional development activities and experiences, or
- A combination of any of the above



What happens if I fail to meet the requirements for an active certificate?

Failing to meet the requirements for an active certificate makes the holder ineligible for employment in a public school. In order to reactivate a certificate, the holder must meet all of the continuing professional education requirements for each five-year period for which they have not completed the necessary credit hours. Holders may also request voluntary inactive status before their five-year period expires if they will no longer be working in a public school. By doing so, the holder is only required to accumulate 30 credit hours in order to reactivate the certificate. Requests for voluntary inactive status can be made via form PDE 338-R, which can be found on PDE's website.

If I am no longer working in a public school, will I still need to maintain an active certificate?

Yes, all certificates must remain active even if the holder is not currently working in a public school, unless the holder has requested a voluntary inactive status by completing and submitting the appropriate forms to PDE.

Who determines if my certificate is active?

The Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality in the Department of Education.

How can I confirm that my certificate is still active?

Act 48 requires the state to maintain records of every certificate holder's continuing professional education status. We recommend that everyone under Act 48 requirements should check their Act 48 status at least twice a year. You can do this by accessing the Act 48 Reporting System on PDE's website. You will be required to enter your Professional Personnel ID (PPI). First time visitors will need to apply for their PPI by entering their name, social security number and date of birth.

How do I apply credits toward activity that are not officially transcribed, like in-service credits and/or professional development activities?

For continuing professional education, the law requires the approved providers (PDE, school district, state-approved or regionally-accredited institution of higher or post secondary education, IU, or other organizations like PSEA and PFT) electronically submit reports to the Department of Education confirming that individuals have successfully completed credit or activity hour bearing workshops and/or experiences.

Can changes to rules and regulations governing certification activity affect me even though I was awarded certification under a different set of policies?

If permitted by statute or regulation, yes. In the past, many changes in law, regulation, and/or Department policy grandfathered those certificate holders already in the "pipeline." However, Act 48, for example, did not. Thus, even though the state refers to the Level II certificate as "permanent," the fact is that law has superseded law and now Pennsylvania certificates are conditioned on meeting continuing professional education requirements, even the "permanent" ones!

When is a certificate not usable for employment?

When it is invalid (time for conversion has expired) or when it is inactive (required professional development activities have not been accrued within a five-year calendar year time frame). An individual cannot work on an invalid certificate at all, but can substitute up to 90 days a year on an inactive certificate and a cumulative 180 days for retirees.

Where can I obtain information about in-service credits and/or PDE-approved continuing professional education activity hours?

Information about in-service credits needed to convert a Level I to a Level II or to satisfy the credit requirements for the Letter of Equivalency is available through your local intermediate unit or school personnel office. Approved activity hours to maintain an active certificate may be earned through PDE-approved providers, including PSEA. The Education Services Division of PSEA has a listing of PDE-approved [PSEA professional development offerings](#). PDE also has information on its web site about its [credit-bearing approved providers](#). PDE, through the [Online Professional Education Network](#) (OPEN), also provides free, online courses.

NOTE: Act 48 continuing professional education requirements have been suspended until July 1, 2013. During the suspension, certificate holders will not be required to complete continuing professional education credit hours. At the end of the suspension, all certificate holders will have the same number of years to complete their credit hours as they had when the suspension began on August 29, 2011. Certificate holders may continue to complete credit hours during the suspension, and all credit hours earned during the suspension will be credited to the certificate holder's Act 48 record.

Who approves continuing professional education activities?

The Pennsylvania Department of Education and/or local school entities are automatically approved providers by law and can approve any other providers. The state does so by approving program proposals submitted by organizations and institutions; the local entities, by including providers in their continuing education plans. View PDE's approved providers.



Professional Educator Discipline

In addition to keeping their certifications valid and active, professional educators are expected to follow the law and act in accordance with moral and ethical standards of professional practice. Certificate holders and charter school teachers are subject to discipline for professional misconduct, which may involve a reprimand or the suspension or revocation of a certificate.

The disciplinary process begins with the filing of a complaint with PDE. Any interested party can file a complaint. Once PDE determines that there is probable cause to support a claim of misconduct, it may file a notice of charges with the Professional Standards and Practice Commission (PSPC), which will determine whether grounds for discipline exist and the type of professional discipline that is warranted. The PSPC may conduct a hearing in cases where there is a factual dispute.

Misconduct that is actionable under the Professional Educator Discipline Act can involve criminal conduct or noncriminal conduct.

Criminal conduct. You may be professionally disciplined because you have been convicted of certain crimes as listed in section 111(e) of the Public School Code. Additionally, your certificate may immediately be suspended if you have been indicted for a crime listed in section 111(e). Crimes for which you can be disciplined include crimes involving **moral turpitude** (e.g. burglary, mail fraud, receiving stolen property, money laundering) and **section 111(e) crimes** (e.g. criminal homicide; aggravated assault; stalking; kidnapping; sexual assault; endangering the welfare of a child; corruption of minors; felony under the Controlled Substance, Drug, Device, and Cosmetic Act)

Noncriminal conduct. You may also be professionally disciplined for conduct that is not considered criminal. In such circumstances, the PSPC must determine if your conduct meets the grounds for discipline and the type of discipline you are to receive. In such cases, PSPC maintains full discretion in determining whether and what type of discipline should be imposed. Noncriminal grounds for discipline include **immorality, incompetency, intemperance, cruelty, and negligence.**

The PSPC may impose the following types of professional discipline:

- Private Reprimand – does not invalidate an educator’s certificate but may be used against him or her in future proceedings
- Public Reprimand – does not invalidate an educators’ certificate but may be used against him or her in future proceedings; notice is communicated through PENN*LINK, PDE’s website, and released to other state departments of education
- Suspension – temporary invalidation of all certificates held by the educator; notice is communicated publicly
- Revocation - invalidation of all certificates held by the educator; notice is communicated publicly
- Surrender in Lieu of Discipline – the educator surrenders his or her certification; the effect is the same as revocation; notice is communicated publicly

PSEA's Professional Development Opportunities

One of PSEA's Strategic Priorities is "Quality Education". Every public school and classroom will be an effective learning environment. PSEA members will be recognized as providers of quality education services and as advocates for their profession by promoting high standards for licensure and professional development. PSEA strives to achieve this goal with the Act 48 Program/Professional Learning Exchange.

Act 48 was enacted on July 1, 2000 and mandates that all PA educators have continuing professional education. PSEA's Act 48 Program/Professional Learning Exchange offers workshops approved for Act 48 activity hours. Approved faculty consists of PSEA staff, and in some cases, selected PSEA members.

PSEA is dedicated to assisting its members in all aspects of their careers including their standard of living, their work environment and their professional growth and development. The PSEA Act 48 Program/Professional Learning Exchange (which is the professional arm of PSEA) presents multiple opportunities for members to seek their personal best in their work: ultimately it is the individual's responsibility to determine their professional needs and to engage in those activities that maximize their professional effectiveness. The standards members apply to their performance reflect the commitment they have for their profession. This web-based catalog focuses on such opportunities.

There is a minimum session size of 15 participants, unless otherwise noted. Flexibility is given with permission of the presenter.

How can I arrange to have one of these workshops?

In most cases, you may contact the presenter directly. You may also contact PSEA's Education Services Division at 1-800-944-7732 for assistance. Be prepared to provide the workshop title, date, location and an approximate number of participants.

Is there a cost to have one of these workshops?

PSEA does not charge school districts for professional development offerings. However offerings presented at Region Continuing Professional Education (RCPE) events may be subject to charge according to PSEA Board of Directors and/or region policies.

When are these workshops available?

Unless otherwise noted, workshops are available weekdays, evenings and weekends. Each PSEA region has a section of our website. You can obtain information on RCPE offerings being held in your region by clicking "Regions" on the left-hand side of our home page, www.psea.org.

[View a list of PSEA's current course offerings.](#)



CREDITABLE SERVICE

Creditable Service

Certification and Staffing Policy Guidelines from the PA Department of Education No. 7, June 1, 2010.

LEVEL II CERTIFICATION — EDUCATIONAL AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

A Level I Certificate is a provisional certificate that must be converted to a permanent Level II Certificate by meeting both educational and service requirements.

General Policies

A Level I (provisional) certification must be converted to a Level II (permanent) certificate by the end of its validity period in order for an individual to remain entitled to perform the professional duties for which a certificate was issued.

This CSPG is not intended to be used for determination of teacher tenure, seniority, or benefit entitlement within the public school system. Information relating to acceptable credits and induction can be obtained in CSPG No. 3-Validity of a PA Certificate, CSPG No.7-Level II Certification-Educational Requirements, and CSPG No. 20-Induction.

Instructional Certificates

Educational Requirements

Educators holding a Level I certificate, who were awarded their initial baccalaureate degree after October 1, 1963, must provide evidence of 24 semester hour post baccalaureate credits to meet the education requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate.

Educators who have been issued a Level I instructional certificate after September 22, 2007 must complete six specific credit hours as a part of the 24 semester hour post baccalaureate credits. Therefore, effective September 1, 2011, individuals applying for Level II conversion must have earned at least six post baccalaureate credits of collegiate study in the area of **Inclusive Classrooms** and/or in the area of **Standards Aligned Systems (SAS)**.

Acceptable coursework in the area of **Inclusive Classrooms** includes the following topic areas:

- Providing effective instruction to students with mild to severe disabilities.
- Research-proven strategies and methods to help special needs learners gain meaningful access to elementary and/or secondary curriculum content.
- Assessing the success of instruction with special learners and improvement of outcomes for all students.
- Methods of motivation and classroom management in settings with special needs learners.



Acceptable coursework in **Standards Aligned Systems (SAS)** includes the following topic areas:

- Understanding the national movement for core academic standards; understanding.
- Pennsylvania's Standards Aligned System (SAS) and the research base underlying its six components.
- Use of diagnostics and formative assessment.
- Use of Pennsylvania's Ed Portal as an ongoing job-embedded resource for educators.
- A requirement to conduct a professional development activity or awareness session in the educator's own school district on Pennsylvania's SAS curriculum frameworks.

Service Requirements

- Requires three years of satisfactory service on a Level I certificate in order to convert to a Level II.
- Educator must possess at least six semi-annual evaluations of satisfactory performance on the Level I certificate in the area for which the certificate was issued.
- Satisfactory service is verified via the PDE-338 P Form.
- Instructional I certificates are made permanent in accordance with the regulation under which the initial instructional certificate was issued.
- All instructional areas of certification will simultaneously convert to a Level II certificate provided all Level II requirements have been met.
- Service time as a long term substitute will be counted towards Level II service time if the assignment is for 45 or more days in a single assignment. An evaluation must be completed for these educators (Refer to the Special Considerations section of this CSPG for further information regarding approved evaluations).

Education Specialist Certificates

Educational Requirements

Educators holding a Level I certificate, who were awarded their initial baccalaureate degree after October 1, 1963, must provide evidence of 24 semester hour post baccalaureate credits to meet the education requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate.

Service Requirements

- Educational Specialist Certificates issued after September 1, 2001 require three years of satisfactory service on the Level I certificate.
- At least six semi-annual evaluations of satisfactory performance in Pennsylvania in each Education Specialist area for which a certificate was issued.



Vocational Instructional Certificates

Educational Requirements

Educators who were issued a Vocational Instructional Level I certificate on or after January 1, 2013 may be recommended for Vocational Instructional Level II certification by their PA approved preparatory college/university after completing a total of 60 credit hours in addition to the 18 credits earned in Vocational I programs, including:

- At least six (6) credits of 180 hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, regarding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.
- At least three (3) credits or 90 hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, in teaching English Language Learners.

Service Requirements

- Vocational Instructional I Certificates require a minimum of three years of satisfactory service in Pennsylvania in any occupational competency area(s) for which the certificate was issued.
- All vocational areas of certification will simultaneously convert to a Level II certificate provided all Level II requirements have been met.

Administrative and Supervisory Certificates

Educational Requirements

Administrative and Supervisory Certificates issued in accordance with regulations established prior to September 1999 who have served in the capacity as principal, assistant principal or vice-principal in a public school of this Commonwealth prior to January 1, 2008 have no additional educational requirements for Level II. Administrative and Supervisory Certificates issued in accordance with September 1999 regulations are valid for 99 years.

Educators granted Administrative Certificates who are employed for the first time in a position of Principal, Assistant Principal or Vice Principal in a public school in the Commonwealth on or after January 1, 2008, must complete the Principal's Induction Program described in Section 1109(f) of the Public School Code within five years of service in order to retain the certificate. For additional information regarding Act 45 of 2007 compliance requirements refer to the PDE website.

Administrative Certificates issued after January 1, 2008 are subject to the requirements of Act 45 of 2007, which amended Section 1109 of the Public School Code. A Principal Certificate issued on or after January 1, 2008, shall be an Administrative I Certificate. No individual may serve as a principal, vice principal, or assistant principal on an Administrative I Certificate for more than five (5) service years in Pennsylvania. A minimum of three years of satisfactory service, and an approved Principal's Induction Program, must be completed before a Level II Certificate will be issued.



Service Requirements

- Administrative I and Supervisory I certificates issued in accordance with regulations established prior to September 1, 1999 are made permanent by completion of three years of satisfactory service in Pennsylvania in each administrative/supervisory certificate area.
- Administrative and Supervisory Certificates issued in accordance with September 1, 1999 regulations are valid for 99 years.
- Administrative I certificates (Type Code 75) issued in accordance with Act 45 of 2007 require three years of satisfactory administrative service in PA and successful completion of a PDE-approved PIL Induction Plan in order to convert to Administrative II certification.

Program Specialist Certificates

- Generally Program Specialist certificate holders possess an Instructional certificate in order to be eligible for a program specialist certificate.
- The holder must maintain the prerequisite Instructional certificate in valid status in order to continue service on the Program Specialist certificate.
- Service on a Program Specialist certificate is creditable toward meeting the experience requirements for Level II certification for the prerequisite Level I certificate.
- Once an educator has completed three years of combined satisfactory service on the Instructional certificate and/or Program Specialist certificate, and has satisfied all educational requirements for Level II certification, the educator may convert the prerequisite Instructional Level I certificate to a Level II certificate.
- Program specialist certificates issued to applicants who possess an equivalent ESL certificate from another state, but do not possess a prerequisite Pennsylvania Instructional certificate have no service time conversion requirements.
- Educators who have accumulated satisfactory service on a Program Specialist Certificate prior to September 1987 may credit that service toward Level II certification and must convert the Level I certificate to Level II as soon as they have satisfied both the educational and service requirements. If an educator has not completed the educational requirements as of September 1987, he or she is required to do so within a six year service period following that date. Service prior to school year 1987-88 will not be charged against these educators.

Educational Credits

Basic Rules

- All courses must have been satisfactorily completed with a passing grade. Transcripts must document the course title, passing grade and credits earned for each course.
- Quarter hours will be converted to semester hours as part of the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality's evaluation.

- Credits earned from repeated classes cannot be used toward Level II certification.
- Credits completed outside of the U.S. must be evaluated by a professional credentials evaluation agency accredited by the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES), or other PDE-approved credentials evaluation agency. The foreign evaluation report must be submitted to the Bureau with the application for Level II Certification. A list of approved professional credential evaluation agencies can be found on the PDE website.

Acceptable Credits

The following credits may be used for conversion to a Level II certificate:

- Credits earned after the conferral of the initial bachelor's degree. Graduate or undergraduate credits earned at, and officially transcribed by, a regionally accredited or a state-approved baccalaureate or graduate degree-granting institution(s), including:
 - Distance learning courses (i.e., video, online, etc.)
 - Credits earned within a PDE-approved Intern preparation/certification program
 - Credits earned toward additional areas of certification
- Pennsylvania Department of Education-approved credits (college equivalent) offered by Intermediate Units.
- Credits in the fields of law, theology, or medicine are acceptable if the educator can present evidence of relevance to his/her certification area and assignment. In such cases, pre-approval by the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality is recommended.
- PDE approved courses:
 - A Principal's Induction Program that is offered by, or approved by, the Department. (All certified principals who are employed for the first time on or after January 1, 2008, and all candidates who apply for a certificate on or after January 1, 2008 must complete the induction program for conversion to a Level II Principal Certificate.)
 - Other PDE courses approved for Level II certification.

Unacceptable Credits

The following credits are **not** acceptable for conversion to a Level II certificate:

- Continuing Education Units (CEUs) – non-credit measures of continuing education awarded by various organizations, professional societies and some colleges or universities. Act 48 credits are considered Continuing Education Units.
- In-service education course credits awarded by providers other than Pennsylvania Intermediate Units or approved by authorities other than the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality.

Creditable Service

An individual must serve a minimum of 50% of the employing school entity's teaching day or week to receive credit toward Level II certification. Satisfactory service (including service as a long-term substitute) for a minimum of 45 days in a single assignment, in areas for which a Level I certificate is held. (Refer to the Calculating Creditable Service Charts section of this CSPG for additional information regarding creditable service time.)

Satisfactory service will be counted against the period of certificate validity (refer to CSPG No. 3 – Validity of a PA Certificate). The Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality will make an official determination of certificate validity upon written request of the school entity or educator.

In order for a school entity or educator to request an official determination of validity, a *PDE Document Worksheet for Determining Certificate Validity* must be submitted to the Bureau. A link to this worksheet is located on the PDE website at www.education.state.pa.us.



Non-Optional Service

Service on a Level I certificate in the following types of schools/institutions must be credited toward Level II certification:

- Public School
- Intermediate Unit
- Career and Technical Schools
- Approved Private Schools (APS)
- Service in any Pre-K Counts program (effective 2008-2009 school year)
- Service on a program specialist certificate (ESL)
- Service in a state correctional facility when providing inmate education and training to school age inmates
- Service in a juvenile correctional facility or county jail: when employed by a public school entity
- Service in an Alternative Education After School program if the children are receiving credit for the coursework taken
- Long-term substitute service as follows:
 - Service must be 45 days or more in a single assignment
 - Service must be 50% or more of the school day or school week
 - Service must be in the area of certification, or the service must be under the scope of the certificate in question

Optional Service

Service on a Level I certificate in the following types of schools/institutions may be credited toward Level II certification at the option of the certificate holder:

- Pennsylvania charter schools
- State Board of Private Academic Schools
- PDE registered non-public, non-licensed schools
- Schools accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Pennsylvania Association of Private Academic Schools, United Private Academic Schools Association, or National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Approved Private Providers
- Service in Head Start programs (with the exception of Pre-K Counts programs)
- Service in child care facilities that are a Star 2 or above
- Service in a Bureau of Corrections facility as a teacher of adult inmates



Non-Creditable Service

Service rendered in assignments for which a person lacks appropriate Level I certification is not creditable toward meeting the experience requirements for Level II certification. Likewise, this service time is not charged against the validity period of the Level I certificate.

Unsatisfactory service is not creditable toward meeting the experience requirements for Level II certification, but is charged against the validity period of the Level I certificate.

Service in the following categories is not creditable toward Level II certification, nor charged against the period of validity of a Level I Certificate:

- Any Intern Certificate (Instructional or Vocational)
- Temporary Teaching Permits
- Approved leave of absence (maternity, medical, etc.)
- Time accrued outside the mandated school year (summer school)
- Emergency Permits
- Act 97 Waivers of Certification
- A teacher of adult classes of persons 21 years of age or older (non-Bureau of Corrections facilities)
- Day-to-day substitutes
- Nonprofessional or paraprofessional positions
- Time accrued outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Calculating Creditable Service Examples

Example A: An individual must service minimally 50% of the employing school entity's teaching day or week to receive credit toward permanent certification. When a school entity's school week is based on "total hours," the calculation of service by the number of days in a week is not applicable.

Number of Service Hours	Periods in School Day	Number of Periods/Hours Served Service Time Counted
6	3	Yes
7	3	No
7	4	Yes
Number of Days in School	Number of Days Served	Service Time Counted
5	2½	Yes
5	3	Yes
5	2	No

Example B: A person must serve minimally 45 days in a long-term substitute assignment or regular capacity during a 180 day state-mandated school year to receive credit toward permanent certification.



Definitions

Long-Term Substitute: An appropriately certified person temporarily employed to fill a position of a temporary professional or professional employee who is taking an approved leave of absence which will exceed 20 cumulative school days in a single assignment.

Day-to-Day Substitute: An appropriately certified person temporarily employed on an intermittent basis to fill a position or positions of a temporary professional or professional employee on an approved leave of absence which does not exceed 20 cumulative school days in a single assignment.

State Mandated 180 Day School Year: 90 days Fall Term/90 Days Spring Term

Type of Educator	Days Worked in Fall	Days Worked in Spring	Total Credit Towards Permanent Certification
Regular Educator	Works 36 Days (No Credit)	Works 90 Days (½ year credit)	½ year
Regular Educator	Works 54 days (½ year credit)	Does Not work (No Credit)	½ year
Substitute Educator	Subs for Educator A for 90 Days (½ year credit)	Subs for Educator B for 48 Days (½ year credit)	1 year
Substitute Educator	Subs for Educator A - 21 Days Subs for Educator B – 21 Days Subs for Educator C – 21 Days	Subs for 20 Days (No Credit)	½ year
Substitute Educator	Subs for 45 Days (½ year credit)	Subs for 45 Days (½ year credit)	1 year
Substitute Educator	Subs across Fall and Spring Term 45 Days (½ year credit)		½ year

Special Considerations

1. An educator holding National Board certification may be issued the highest level certificate available. A National Board certificate holder may be issued a Level II certification comparable in grade, scope, and content area to the National Board certificate. If an individual applies for a Level II certificate in an area that is not comparable in grade, scope, and content area to the National Board certificate, the application must be reviewed by the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality Director for approval.
2. All school and system leaders employed in a Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) covered position must meet the continuing education requirements (PIL proportional hours). If the continuing education requirements as specified above are not met, the educator's Administrative Certificate will become inactive.
3. Educators holding a Level I Principal K-6 or Level I Principal 7-12 and a Level I Principal K-12 certificate may convert to Level II simultaneously if the service time is covered by the grade span of each certificate. For example, an individual holding a Level I Principal K-6 and a Principal K-12 certificate may simultaneously convert the certificates if the service time was earned at the K-6 level.

Special Considerations: Instructional and Education Specialist Certificates

1. Educators who have completed the service time requirements to convert to a Level II certificate, but who have not been evaluated using an approved PDE Evaluation form (long-term substitutes, private school educators, etc.), may have their satisfactory service time attested to in writing by the Chief School Administrator of the approved public or nonpublic school entity in which the service time was performed.
2. An educator holding an Instructional or Educational Specialist Level I certificate that was issued after September 2001 must achieve satisfactory results on the PDE-approved Level II assessments for conversion to a Level II certificate. Additionally, Educational Specialists must also complete an induction program approved by PDE.
3. An Instructional Level I certificate will lapse if an educator does not complete all educational requirements and convert to a Level II certificate within six years of service time. All Instructional Level I certificates held by an educator will simultaneously lapse. Educators may not continue to teach on lapsed certificates.
4. An Educational Specialist certificate will lapse if an educator does not complete all educational requirements and convert to a Level II certificate within six years of service time. All certificates held by an educator with a lapsed Educational Specialist certificate will not simultaneously lapse. Only the Educational Specialist certificate that has not been converted to a Level II certificate within the six years of service time will lapse. Educators may not continue to provide services on a lapsed certificate.
5. An educator holding an Instructional I or Educational Specialist Level I certificate issued after June 1, 1987 must provide evidence of 24 post baccalaureate semester hour credits and three years of satisfactory service time to meet the requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate. Additionally, Instructional certificate holders must complete an induction program approved by PDE.
6. An educator holding a Level I certificate that was issued prior to September 1980 was initially granted a renewable three-year certificate. In September 1980, regulations were passed extending the validity of the certificate to a total of six service years essentially eliminating the need for a renewal. The validity period of the certificate does not extend past the 6th service year and must be converted to Level II by the end of the service time.
7. An educator holding a Level I certificate, who was awarded a baccalaureate degree between October 1, 1959 and October 1, 1963, must provide evidence of 12 post-baccalaureate semester hour credits to meet the educational requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate. There is no provision in the certification regulations for renewal of this certificate for any additional period of time.

8. An educator holding a Level I certificate, who was awarded a baccalaureate degree before October 1, 1959, must provide evidence of six post-baccalaureate semester hour credits to meet the education requirements for conversion to a Level II certificate. There is no provision in the certification regulations for renewal of this certificate for any additional time period.



Special Considerations: Non U.S. Citizens

1. Non-U.S. citizens who possess a foreign language Instructional Certificate may convert an Instructional I Foreign Language certificate to Level II after three years of service.
2. Non-citizen educators who are teaching any certified area other than a Foreign Language cannot convert to a Level II certificate until they become U.S. citizens.
3. Satisfactory service on an Alien Provisional certificate, including service as a long-term substitute, will be credited toward Level II certification once an educator has submitted evidence of U.S. citizenship.

**PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DOCUMENTATION
WORKSHEET FOR DETERMINING CERTIFICATE VALIDITY**

Employee: _____ SSN: _____

Address: _____ Certificate (issued) (renewed)

Effective: _____ Endorsed for _____

Half SY ⁵	Days Served ¹	ed ¹	Status ²	Assignment ³	ment ³	Employer ⁴
1 st Sem, SY 20__ - __	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	E
2 nd Sem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
1 st Sem, SY 20__ - __	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	L
2 nd Sem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
1 st Sem, SY 20__ - __	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	P
2 nd Sem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
1 st Sem, SY 20__ - __	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	A
2 nd Sem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
1 st Sem, SY 20__ - __	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	M
2 nd Sem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
1 st Sem, SY 20__ - __	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	S
2 nd Sem	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
(Continue on rear)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	

- Count only days in which employee served 50% or more of the school day as scheduled for the school organization in which (s)he was assigned.
- Use S to indicate long-term substitute service for a regularly elected employee; use RE to indicate regularly employed "temporary professional or professional employee" status. Do not count "day-to-day per diem substitute service.
- Indicate area of endorsement appearing on the certificate in which employee was assigned.
- Show only one employer on each line. If employed by two schools during the same half-school year, place asterisk (*) after the one school employer and record data for second school employer on the rear of this sheet.
- Enter all professional-level service on the above certificate in an elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by periods of half-school year commencing with the month of certificate issuance or renewal as shown above.

AUTHENTICATION: (Enter signature and date)

Date School Official

Date

Above-Referenced Employee

