

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
District Certification Contacts
Nonpublic School Certification Contacts

FROM: David C. Ashburn

DATE: May 28, 2002

SUBJECT: Educator Certification Legislative Changes

There is good news at last. Senate Bill 20, the school code rewrite bill implementing a K-20 seamless education system, was passed during the second Legislative Special Session in 2002 and now has been signed by the Governor. There are several important changes in the laws governing educator certification that address district personnel issues. This memorandum provides information related to these issues of immediate concern for certification advisement and policy implementation for the certification changes that are effective July 1, 2002.

Also, please note that the rewrite of the school code assigns new numbers for all sections of the school code. Thus, to help in locating and understanding the changes, the previous numerical statute citation will be shown for the new citations included in this document. Please do not hesitate to contact staff in the Bureau of Educator Certification if additional assistance is needed.

School Code Rewrite Changes Effective July 1, 2002

Section 1012.56 Educator certification requirements (was Section 231.17)

Subsection (1) Application

A statement of status of eligibility may be reissued for one additional 2-year period if application is made while the initial statement is valid or within one year after the initial statement expires, **only if the subject area is an area that is authorized by the State Board.** Since there is a new certification structure being established, there are certification areas that are being eliminated and will not be issued after a specified date. For instance, after July 1, 2002, a statement of status of eligibility may not be reissued for Elementary Education (grades 1-6) nor for the exceptional categorical areas of Emotionally Handicapped, Mentally Handicapped, Specific Learning Disabilities, Physically Impaired, or Varying Exceptionalities.

Subsection (4) Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge

Beginning July 1, 2002, a certification subject that requires a master's or higher degree pursuant to State Board Rule requires completion of the subject area specialization requirements in the subject area rule and a passing score on the subject area test to satisfy the subject area requirements for a Professional Certificate. The subject areas affected by this change are:

- Guidance and Counseling
- Educational Leadership
- School Psychologist
- Reading
- Administration of Adult Education (no subject test available)
- Speech-Language Impaired
- Local Director of Vocational Education (no subject test available)

All other certification subjects available for certification on July 1, 2002, that require a bachelor's or higher degree and for which there is a subject area test may present either documentation of completion of the specialization requirements for the subject area or a passing score on the subject area examination to satisfy subject requirements for issuance of a Temporary Certificate. Thus, a passing score on the subject area examination satisfies the subject area requirements for issuance of the Temporary Certificate and also the subject area mastery for a Professional Certificate.

Reminders:

- The option to pass a subject area examination does not apply to endorsements since an endorsement does not require a subject area examination.

- To use the option of presenting a passing score on the subject area examination to establish eligibility for a Temporary Certificate or to add a subject to a valid Professional Certificate, the applicant must submit an application for the subject July 1, 2002, or later and earn a passing score on the appropriate subject area examination after July 1, 2002.

Subsection (5) Mastery of Professional Preparation and Educator Competence

The professional preparation course-count **option** is retained. Mastery of the professional preparation requirement for the Professional Certificate by completion of the twenty semester hours college credit also requires completion of the two years practical teaching experience, verification of completion of the Professional Education Competence (PEC) demonstration, and a passing score on the Professional Education subtest.

Subsection (7) Professional Preparation Alternative Certification and Education Competency Program

Flexibility is provided for alternative certification programs. Authorization is granted that a school district may choose to implement the state-developed alternative certification model or a district-developed alternative certification program that has been approved by the Department of Education.

Summary of General, Professional, and Subject Requirements **Effective July 1, 2002**

Mastery of General Knowledge for the Professional Certificate. Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of general knowledge are:

1. Achievement of passing scores on the new Florida General Knowledge Examination required by State Board rule,
2. Achievement of passing scores on the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) **earned prior to July 1, 2002,**
3. A valid standard teaching certificate issued by another state that requires an examination of mastery of general knowledge (July 1, 2002, see Bureau of Educator Certification home page "testing" for a list of states),
4. A valid standard certificate issued by another state and a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or
5. A valid standard certificate issued by another state and documentation of 2 years of continuous successful teaching or administrative experience earned during the 5-year period immediately preceding the date of application for certification.

Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge for the Professional Certificate. Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of subject area knowledge are:

1. Achievement of a passing score on a subject area examination required by the State Board,

2. Completion of the subject area specialization requirements in State Board rule and verification of subject area competence by the superintendent or chief executive officer of a state-supported or nonpublic school for a subject area for which there is no subject area examination,
3. Completion of the subject area specialization requirements in State Board rule for an area requiring a master's or higher degree and achievement of a passing score on the corresponding subject area test,
4. A valid standard certificate issued by another state that requires an examination of mastery of subject area knowledge (July 1, 2002, see Bureau of Educator Certification home page "testing" for a list of states),
5. A valid standard certificate issued by another state and a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or
6. A valid standard certificate issued by another state and documentation of 2 years of continuous successful teaching or administrative experience earned during the 5-year period immediately preceding the date of application for certification.

Mastery of Professional Preparation and Education Competence for the

Professional Certificate. Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of professional preparation and education competence are:

1. Completion of a Florida teacher preparation program approved by the Department of Education and achievement of a passing score on the professional education examination required by State Board rule,
2. A valid standard certificate issued by another state that requires an examination of mastery of professional education competence (July 1, 2002, see Bureau of Educator Certification home page "testing" for a list of states),
3. Completion of a teacher preparation program outside Florida and achievement of a passing score on the professional education examination required by State Board rule,
4. A valid standard certificate issued by another state and a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards,
5. A valid standard certificate issued by another state and documentation of 2 years of continuous successful teaching or administrative experience earned during the 5-year period immediately preceding the date of application for certification,
6. Completion of the Florida alternative certification program or an alternative certification program developed by a Florida school district and approved by the Department of Education, or
7. Completion of the twenty semester hours in professional preparation in State Board rule, practical teaching experience requirement, verification of the professional education competence demonstration, and achievement of a passing score on the professional education examination required by State Board rule.

Fingerprinting Procedures

Public School Districts

It is exciting that school districts will be processing live-scan fingerprints on site within the district beginning July 2002. It is our understanding that the district will receive the electronic fingerprint report from law enforcement agencies within a few days rather than weeks. Public school districts are to continue the present policy of submitting to the Bureau of Educator Certification the printed hard copy fingerprint report in conjunction with the CT-110 form with the superintendent's signature requesting issuance of the certificate and a complete CG-10 application and fee (if not already on file).

Nonpublic Schools

The procedures for nonpublic schools do not change. The nonpublic school organization must submit to the Bureau of Educator Certification for each individual a package that includes: a complete CG-10 application and fee (if not already on file), the fingerprint card, a \$45 fingerprint processing fee, and a CT-111 form with the chief administrative officer's signature requesting issuance of the certificate.

School Code Rewrite Changes Effective January 7, 2003

Section 1001.42 Powers and duties of the district school board (was Section 230.23)

Subsection (5) Personnel

School boards are authorized to hire school principals without educator certification consistent with the school board's written policy related to alternative "certification." The district is authorized to establish alternative requirements that may include training and professional development for employment of principals who do not hold an educator certificate issued by the Department of Education pursuant to Section 1012.56, F.S.

Section 1012.585 Process for renewal of professional certificates (was Section 231.24)

Subsection (5) Reinstatement of an Expired Certificate

The process for reinstatement of an expired Professional Certificate is modified. There is no longer a five-year time limitation for submission of an application for reinstatement of an expired certificate. An individual who has held a Florida Professional Certificate and allowed the certificate to expire may submit an application for reinstatement at any time following the expiration. The requirements to reinstate the certificate are not changed.