

Frequently Asked Questions About the I-Plan

1. What is an I-Plan?

The I-Plan, designed by RI educators, builds upon and respects the Professional Development work that educators do as part of their profession. An I-Plan is a goals-driven professional development plan for re-certification that is:

- informed by self-study
- grounded in professional standards
- connected to school/district initiatives
- supported by plans for sustained professional development.

2. What is the purpose of an I-Plan?

The I-Plan is the means by which RI educators fulfill re-certification requirements. Educators create goals and design professional development plans that are relevant to their personal and professional aspirations. These goals and the professional development activities are connected to school and district initiatives. Research demonstrates that direct application of sustained, professional development of educators has a positive impact on work with children, and ultimately is the single, most significant factor in improving student achievement. Improving student learning is the hallmark of the I-Plan.

3. Who is eligible to attend a training session and MUST participate in the I-Plan program at this time?

Any Rhode Island educator obtaining or renewing a 5-year professional certificate used for a current teaching or administrator position will develop an I-Plan and implement professional development activities that align with I-Plan goals over a 5-year cycle. The following situations describe when an I-Plan must be written:

- A new educator holding a Certificate of Eligibility for Employment (CEE) gains regular employment as a teacher or administrator in a Rhode Island public school and applies for a Professional Certificate.
- An educator obtains or renews a 5-year Professional Certificate and is **USING** that certificate for a teaching assignment or for continued regular professional employment in a Rhode Island public school.

4. What steps are required to develop an I-Plan?

The steps to develop an I-Plan are:

- Engage in a self-study to determine personal/ professional aspirations and pertinent school initiatives.
- Formulate 3-4 goals.
- State a personal/professional rationale for **each** goal.
- Link at least **one** goal to a school or district initiative by stating the name of an improvement document, and paraphrasing from it with wording that aligns to the goal.
- Link one goal to the certificate **in use**.

- Link all goals with professional standards.
- Outline anticipated professional development categories for each goal.
- Submit the I-Plan for RIDE approval.

5. What are the categories of professional development activities that align with I-Plan goals and qualify for recertification through I-Plan?

The six categories for professional development activities provide a range of opportunities for educators to participate in professional development that is relevant to their practice and their students.

In order to qualify an activity for recertification through the I-Plan, each activity must be:

1. Clearly aligned to an I-Plan goal.
2. Documented with a completed *Verification Form for Professional Development Activities* entered on the electronic I-plan system.

The six categories for professional development activities are:

- **Category 1: College or University Coursework**
Undergraduate/Graduate Level Courses; Master's Degree/CAGS/PhD/ EdD Programs
- **Category 2: Workshop/Conferences/Training Sessions**
Professional Institutes/Training Sessions/Audited Courses/ Workshops
- **Category 3: Collaborative and Partnership Activities:**
Applied Studies with Colleagues such as: Mentoring, Peer Coaching, Collegial Study Groups
Professional Networks involve active participation in professional, education-focused organizations.
- **Category 4: Involvement in Development/Improvement Processes**
Board, Committee, Team Participation: School Improvement Team, SALT Visit, Advisory Board
Development Work: Developing Curricula, Instructional Units or Assessments
Parent/Community Outreach: School to Work Programs, School Support with Families/Community
- **Category 5: Individually Guided Professional Development**
Independent Study/Educational Project: Educational Travel; Externship
- **Category 6: Professional Leadership Experiences**
National Certification Programs; Publications and Presentations

*For more detailed information on the six categories, click on **Professional Development Categories** on the RIDE website or **Qualifying Professional Development Activities** in the I-Plan Document Library.*

6. What criteria are used to approve how goals are written in an I-Plan?

Goals must contain two components:

- The goal must state the skill(s) or knowledge to be acquired.
- The goals must state the application of skill/ knowledge to a classroom, school, or district setting, or the desired outcomes of acquired skill/knowledge.

For the self-study rationale, each goal must contain:

- A personal/professional rationale that states why the goal is important to the I-Planner.
- A school/district rationale for at least one goal that identifies the improvement document and paraphrases/states a school/ district improvement initiative from that document.

- One to four professional standards that align with the goal.
- Two to four categories of professional development activities. *

(*An advanced degree/certificate/endorsement requires only one identified category, Category 1: College/University Course.)

7. How is an I-Plan approved?

I-Plans are submitted to RIDE. A panel of trained educators reviews each I-Plan according to standard criterion detailed on the *Rubric for Reviewing I-Plan Proposals* and communicates approval or the need for modifications to the I-Planner.

8. What can be done if an I-Plan is not approved and needs modifications (Needs Mods)?

- If the Reviewers find that some area of the plan does not meet the criteria for acceptance, the plan is labeled “Needs Modifications” (Needs Mods). The I-Planner will receive correspondence providing feedback on which areas need to be modified.
- The educator will make appropriate revisions and resubmit the I-Plan within 30 business days.
- The review panel will review and respond to re-submissions in the same manner as described for the initial I-Plan submission; however, only those areas that did not meet the criterion previously will be reviewed.

9. How is an I-Plan implemented? How does the electronic system aid in documenting professional development activities?

Once approved, the I-Plan is implemented by participating in professional development activities that align with I-Plan goals and by verifying activities with appropriate documentation

There are four components on the electronic system used in implementing an I-Plan:

- Over a five-year renewal period, educators must record each of their completed professional development activities that link to their I-Plan goals on the on-line *Verification Form for Documentation of PD Activities*. The educator inputs and **SAVES** the professional development information, and then collects the required evidence such as transcripts or professional development credit reports (PDC) to verify completion of the professional development activity. This evidence must be stapled to the back of the Verification Form for Documentation of PD Activities.
- The *Annual Update and Self Review of Verification* lists chronologically each year, by goal and by the category, the earned contact hours attributed to I-Plan goals for completed professional development activities.

- A *Self-Review Summary* provides feedback on how documented professional development hours meet the minimum I-Plan requirements: (1) 150 total hours; (2) use of 2 Professional Development (Prof Dev) categories per goal, (3) 20 hours per goal, with 5 hours per category per goal.
- The **Professional Development & Activity Log** of professional development aids the I-Planner in gauging progress in working towards goals each school year. In September, the educator must review the log for accuracy and then submit professional development contact hours earned during the previous school year, September 1 through September 30 of the following year to RIDE.

10. What are the requirements for verifying professional development activities that lead to successful completion of an I-Plan?

Educators must record documented professional development activities as they are completed each year from September 1 to September 30 of the following year. Educators electronically complete a *Verification Form for Documentation of Professional Development Activity* that states how each completed activity links to the I-Plan goal.

By the end of the 5-year renewal cycle, the educator must show completion of:

- **150 contact hours, minimum**, of documented professional development activities connected to I-Plan goals.
- **20 contact hours, minimum**, for each goal.
- **2 categories***, minimum, per goal and **5 contact hours** per category per goal.

*If the goal is to pursue an advanced degree or additional certification or endorsement, only one category (College/University Coursework) is required.

11. *What if I move to a different school or district, change my assignment, or need to make major changes in my I-Plan during the renewal period?*

Approved plans can be **amended** when I-Plan goals no longer connect to educator's work assignment, the certificate in use, or the school/district initiatives identified in the Self-Study Rationale, due to a significant change in assignment, school, or district.

When an educator wishes to revise an I-Plan due to a significant change, he or she may formally submit an amended I-PLAN for approval. The amended I-Plan is reviewed as a new submission. All goals and elements will be reviewed.

12. *Is training available to learn how to construct and implement an I-Plan?*

Yes, state-sponsored trainings are held in four regional locations throughout the state on a monthly basis. A schedule is available on the RIDE website. For those not able to attend an I-Plan training, an on-line tutorial is available also on the RIDE website: <http://www.rido.gov>

13. What steps lead to re-certification?

RIDE reviews the I-Planner's submission of *Verification of Documentation of Professional Development Activities Form* with its supporting evidence, along with the *Professional Analysis* that is a reflection on the skills/knowledge, acquired and its application to professional practice. RIDE verifies that criteria have been met which is the basis for renewal of a certificate.