Certification Regulations

Promulgated
December 2018

Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services
RIDE will be reaching out in a variety of ways to ensure that all RI educators have the opportunity to understand the newly promulgated Certification Regulations.

Today, we will provide an overview of newly approved certification regulations and will focus on 7 objectives:

• Outline effective dates of new certification regulations
• Explain new reinstatement of expired certificates requirements
• Explain new certification renewal requirements
• Share new certification pathways to certification
• Share changes to existing certificate areas
• Explain professional learning, professional learning plans, impact on certification renewal requirements and describe phase-in of Professional Learning Units (PLUs)
• For one year prior to the approval of the certification regulations, RIDE met with multiple stakeholders, held public hearings and hosted 14 public meetings to gain feedback and input from stakeholders on certification changes.

• The feedback received focused on the need for two guiding principles; that teachers needed more experience at the pre-service level and professional learning that is need focused and connected to the needs in the schools and districts.
• Effective January 1, 2019, there are three scenarios for eligibility to reinstate certificates.

• Scenario 1: An educator whose certificate has expired up to one year from the expiration date will need to complete the general application and pay both the reinstatement fee and appropriate certificate fees.

• Scenario 2: An educator whose certificate has been expired between 1 and 10 years from the expiration date, in this case the educator will need to complete the application, and pay the appropriate reinstatement and certificate fees AND provide evidence of the required RI tests.

• Scenario 3: An educator whose certificate has been expired for more than 10 years. The educator will need to complete the application, pay the appropriate reinstatement and certificate fees AND provide evidence of the required RI tests AND submit a completed Credential Review Plan of Study to demonstrate currency of the certificate.
• For educators who hold certificates expiring in August of 2019, Final Effectiveness Ratings will be required as part of renewal.

• Beginning January 1, 2020, Final Effectiveness Ratings will no longer be tied to certification renewal requirements.

• However, educator evaluation is still in place as it has been long before Race to the Top. Data is still required to be reported to RIDE. There is also an obligation in ESSA to report some state level data around effectiveness.

• Lastly, based on evaluations, educators receive feedback and support at the district level towards continuous improvement of professional practice and this information gathered by districts during evaluations may inform staff professional learning needs.
One key aspect of the new regulations is the re-introduction of a requirement for ongoing professional learning in order for educators to renew their certificate.

This requirement will go into effect starting January 1, 2020, and will be gradually phased in over time, depending on your certificate type.

This requirement signals RIDE's view that professional learning is critical for educators to maintain and grow the skills and content knowledge they need to effectively educate and support students.

As part of these regulations, districts will be required to create professional learning plans (PLP) that will articulate the district’s role in providing professional learning for their educators.
• Professional learning will be measured in professional learning units, or PLUs.
• Once fully phased in, educators who hold an initial three year certificate will be responsible for the equivalent of 30 PLUs annually or 90 PLUs collectively, to meet renewal requirements.
• Once fully phased in, educators renewing professional or advanced certificates will be required, once fully phased in, to complete the equivalent of 20 professional learning units annually.
• Only educators who are working in RI public school settings and hold a valid full certificate are required to provide PLUs as part of renewal.
• Educators who hold RI preliminary certificates are NOT required to provide PLUs as part of renewal.

Professional Learning Units (PLU) Required

• Professional learning will be measured using the Professional Learning Unit (PLU).
• PLU requirements will be phased in starting with certificates that expire in August of 2020.
• Educators seeking to transition from initial to professional certificates will be required, once fully phased in, to complete the equivalent of 30 professional learning units annually.
• Educators renewing professional or advanced certificates will be required, once fully phased in, to complete the equivalent of 20 professional learning units annually.

• Note: Professional Learning Units will only be required for educators working in RI public school settings using a full certificate.
In order to support educators and districts, the regulations include descriptive categories of the types of activities that may count towards PLUs.

RIDE intentionally created fairly broad categories so that districts and educators would have the flexibility to meet their professional learning needs. There are four broad categories.

If an activity improves or enhances an educator's:
  - subject matter or content knowledge and skills,
  - their pedagogical or pedagogical content knowledge and skills
  - their ability to implement curriculum effectively, or
  - enhance educator effectiveness, then it may be accepted towards PLUs.

It is also important to note that these categories, while broad, do have reasonable limits, and activities that fall outside of them may not be counted towards PLUs, as we will discuss in the next slide.
The regulations also provide concrete examples of activities that could be counted for PLUs.

This list of activities is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

The examples include many different types of site-based learning, such as well structured Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on the implementation of strong curriculum materials via lesson study or looking at student work analysis.

They also include coaching and induction activities, which has been a point of emphasis in our state for some time.

Other examples include emerging forms of professional learning, such as micro credentials, and more traditional forms, such as university coursework or workshops facilitated by an expert 3rd party.

What is true about all of these examples, and should be noted, is that they fall into one of the four broad categories we discussed on the previous slide.

Activities that do not fall into one of the four categories and do not relate to improving educator practice may not be counted for PLUs. Many of these activities, such as safety trainings, are important for schools but are not professional learning.
The following conversions help to understand how common activities translate into Professional Learning Units (PLUs):

- For activities most easily measured in hours, one hour of the activity is equivalent to 1 PLU.
- A college credit is equivalent to 15 PLUs, and completion of components of National Board Certification is converted at the rate of one component equaling 45 PLUs.
- The value of a demonstrated competency via micro credential should be set with the district before the micro credential is started, and may range from 5 to 10 PLUs depending on the difficulty of the competency and the amount of time likely required to master it.
Ultimately, educators are responsible for keeping track of their PLUs and maintaining records that attest to their attendance and participation in any activities used to accumulate PLUs. However, the responsibility for approving PLUs lies with the district superintendent or designee. Approval of units should be consistent with the regulations and, once it is in place, consistent with the district's professional learning plan.

LEAs will not be required to upload documentation. The only sign off that RIDE will require is superintendent assurance.

RIDE will build an electronic verification mechanism as part of the application process.

Educators should maintain their records.

Districts will approve PLUs, then verify to RIDE that an educator has fulfilled the PLU renewal requirements.

RIDE will audit a percentage of applications to make sure the PLU requirement is being implemented in a manner consistent with these regulations.

Records of approval and completion of PLUs must be made available to RIDE upon request.
• If for some reason an educator has not completed the required number of professional learning units for renewal of their certificate, they may apply for a once in their career, non-renewable Special Provisional certificate.
• This certificate is valid for 1-year and allows an educator one year to meet the required PLUs for the previous renewal cycle.
• Upon completion of the PLUs, the educator will then apply for the appropriate initial or professional certificate which will be issued from the original issuance date to the original expiration date.
• For example: An educator due to renew his/her professional certificate by August 31, 2020, but did not complete the required PLUs would apply for the Special Provisional certificate. The educator would have SY 2020-2021 to meet the PLUs required for renewal.
• Upon meeting the previously required PLUs, the educator may apply and will then be issued a professional certificate with an expiration date of 2025.
• Essentially, the educator now has 4 years to complete the full 5 years of PLUs.
• At the end of that certification cycle the educator would owe the full number of PLUs for the current certification cycle.
• PLUs earned while holding a Special Provisional certificate, cannot be used towards the educators current certification cycle requirements.
In order to support their educators in meeting this requirement, and to increase the efficacy of professional learning generally, the new certification regulations call for districts to create a professional learning plan.

This plan must include an identification of needs for professional learning and how the professional learning will align to the educator, district, and school needs as articulated in existing strategic or school improvement plans. This should lead to both alignment with existing initiatives and differentiation of professional learning for educators.

It must include examples of activities the district will allow, consistent with these regulations.

It must include a mechanism for how PLUs will be approved.

Finally, the plans must articulate how the district will ensure there are opportunities for professional learning that is ongoing and within the school context, rather than relying on one-time activities.

RIDE is currently working on a strategy for supporting the development of some PL plan models.
This table lays out how the phase in for PLUs will occur for educators holding an initial certificate.

The left column is the year the certificate expires and educators must renew their certificate(s).

The middle column is the formula used to calculate the required number of PLUs for renewal.

The right column is the total number of units that will be required in order to renew the initial 3-year certificate or progress to the 5-year professional certificate.

For example, an educator seeking renewal of an initial 3-year certificate or progression to the 5-year professional of their initial certificate in 2022 will be required to have completed 75 PLUs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1</th>
<th>Scenario 2</th>
<th>Scenario 3</th>
<th>Scenario 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not employed* during the 3 years</td>
<td>Employed* fewer than 3 years</td>
<td>Employed* fewer than 3 years with leave of absence</td>
<td>Employed* all 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No PLUs</td>
<td>• No PLUs</td>
<td>• Pro-rated number of PLUs based on years worked</td>
<td>• Appropriate number of PLUs (See Phase-In chart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Renew as 3-year Initial</td>
<td>• Renew as 3-year Initial</td>
<td>• Letter confirming Leave status</td>
<td>• Progress to 5-year Professional</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* In a publicly funded educational setting

- This table outlines the renewal and progression requirements for educators who hold three year Initial certificates.
- In scenario one, educators who are not employed or who are employed in a non-public setting are not required to submit evidence of PLUs to renew and will renew as a three year Initial certificate.
- In scenario two, educators who are employed fewer than three years in a Rhode Island public school are not required to submit PLUs to renew and will renew as a three year Initial certificate.
- In scenario three, educators employed in a Rhode Island public school for less than three years, due to a leave of absence, will complete a pro-rated number of PLUs, must provide a letter verifying their leave status and will progress to a five year Professional certificate.
- In the last scenario, educators who are employed all three years of their renewal cycle will be required to provide evidence of PLUs and will progress to a five year Professional certificate.
This table lays out how the phase in for PLUs will occur for educators who already hold a professional certificate as of December 31, 2019.

In the left column is the year the certificate expires and will require renewal. In the middle column is the formula used to calculate the required number of PLUs for renewal. The column on the right tells the total number of units that will be required in order to renew a 5-year professional certificate or progress to a 7-year advanced professional certificate.

For example, an educator seeking renewal of a 5-year professional certificate or progression to a 7-year advanced professional certificate in 2027 will be required to have completed 85 PLUs.
- This table lays out how the phase in for PLUs will occur for educators who are issued a professional certificate between 2020 and 2025.
- In the left column is the year the certificate expires and will require renewal. In the middle column is the formula used to calculate the required number of PLUs for renewal. The column on the right tells the total number of units that will be required in order to renew a 5-year professional certificate or progress to a 7-year advanced professional certificate.
- For example, an educator seeking renewal of a 5-year professional certificate or progression to a 7-year advanced professional certificate in 2027 will be required to have completed 100 PLUs.
• This table outlines the renewal and progression requirements for educators who hold 5-year Professional certificates.

• In scenario 1, educators who are not employed or are employed in a non-public setting are not required to submit evidence of PLU to renew and will renew as a 5-year professional certificate.

• In scenario 2, educators who are employed fewer than 5 years and have taken a leave of absence will be required to submit a pro-rated number of PLUs, and a letter verifying their leave status and will renew as a 5-year professional certificate.

• In scenario 3, educators employed all 5 years of their certificate cycle will need to provide evidence of PLUs and will renew as a 5-year professional certificate.

• In the last scenario, educators who are employed all 5 years of their renewal cycle will need to provide evidence of PLUs, and one aspirational benchmark in order to progress to a 7-year advanced professional certificate.

• Examples of aspirational benchmarks could be earning National Board certification or being selected as the RI state Teacher of the Year.
The renewal requirements for the 7-year advanced professional certificate are based on the educator’s employment status and are similar to the 5 year Professional renewal requirements.

In scenario 1, educators who are not employed or are employed a non-public setting are not required to submit evidence of PLU to renew and will renew as a 5 Year professional certificate.

In scenario 2, educators who are employed fewer than 7 years and have taken a leave of absence will be required to submit a pro rated number of PLUs, and a letter verifying their leave stats and will renew as a 5 year professional certificate.

In scenario 3, educators employed all 7 years of there certificate cycle, who provide evidence of the appropriate number PLU, but have NOT submitted an aspirational benchmark, will renew as a 5 year professional.

In the last scenario, educators who are employed all 7 years of their renewal cycle, submit the appropriate number of PLUs, AND evidence of one aspirational benchmark, will renew as a 7-year advanced professional certificate.
Beginning June 1, 2019, educators who hold a valid Bilingual Dual Language certificate are eligible to apply for an ESL certificate.

To be eligible for this certificate area, an educator must demonstrate the following:

- English proficiency
- Completion of 3 courses
  - First and Second Language Acquisition,
  - English Linguistics and
  - Curriculum Assessment and Methods for English Learners.
• This certification change occurred because of feedback from districts and prep program stakeholders.
• Beginning June 1, 2019, educators who hold a valid ESL certificate are eligible to be the teacher of record in a Dual Language-English assignment.
• If the teacher has taught in a BDL-English classroom for LESS than 2 years, evidence of professional learning in the area of Foundations of Dual Language Programming and Implementation of Dual Language Programming will be required as part of renewal requirements.
• Beginning June 1, 2019, CTE education and experience requirements will be aligned to industry degree and experience requirements.
• A bachelor’s degree will no longer be required by all candidates seeking CTE certificates.
• Degree requirements will be aligned to the CTE standards and industry requirements.
• For example, a candidate seeking a CTE-auto mechanic certificate will be required to provide evidence of a GED or High School diploma, education coursework through a preparation program to meet the content and pedagogical competencies and the RI required tests.
This chart outlines the shift in CTE experience requirements. Candidates who hold a GED or a high school diploma will be required to provide 5 years of experience in the CTE area. Candidates who hold an associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree in the CTE area will be required to submit 3 years of experience in the CTE area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postsecondary Education</th>
<th>Work Experience Requirement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma or GED</td>
<td>Requires five (5) years work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree in the career and technical field</td>
<td>Requires three (3) years of experience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• The new certification regulations also impact the CTE testing requirements.
• Individuals who hold advanced state-issued licenses or advanced industry certificates are NOT required to complete subject matter testing requirements (NOCTI).
• However, if work experience or completion of degree is MORE than ten (10) years prior to date of application the candidate is required to take and pass NOCTI.
• The pedagogical test, the Principles of Learning and Teaching is still required as part of meeting full certification requirements.
• The District Level Administrator - Special Education certificate no longer requires that the educator hold a Building Level Administrator certificate.
• However, the requirements of an advanced degree, three years of experience and graduate coursework are still required for eligibility for this certificate area.
• Candidates are required to provide evidence of 9 graduate credits in special education AND coursework in Supervision of Special Education Programs and Services, Supervision of Personnel, Supervision of Instruction or Program Evaluation AND School and District Finance.
In meeting with various stakeholders, the request for an additional pathway to hire school nurses was repeatedly voiced.

A Registered School Nurse certificate was developed to support schools and districts and their individual needs for a school nurse.

This educator cannot be teacher of record in a public school classroom.

Additionally, the superintendent employing a registered School Nurse must verify to RIDE that they were unable to hire a certified School Nurse Teacher or that the position does not involve serving as a teacher of record.

**All Grades Registered School Nurse**

- Effective date: June 1, 2019
- Valid for assignment as a Registered School Nurse in grades PK-12 in Rhode Island public schools
- Individuals who hold this certificate are not eligible to serve as teacher of record
- Superintendent must submit verification to RIDE that they were unable to hire a certified School Nurse Teacher or that the position does not involve serving as a teacher of record
• Candidates applying for the Registered School Nurse certificate are required to hold a bachelor’s degree, complete a professional nursing program, have three (3) years of documented experience as a professional nurse, AND hold a current RN license from Department of Health.

• Educators who hold a Registered School Nurse certificate may serve only as a school nurse and cannot be teacher of record in a RI public school classroom.

• When renewing the Registered School Nurse certificate for the first time, an educator must provide professional learning units in school-based nursing procedures, child and adolescent development and supports for student learning needs.
• Beginning June 1, 2019, American Sign Language will be included as an All Grades World Language certificate area.
Beginning June 1, 2019, educators who hold a general All Grades teacher content certificate will be eligible to apply for special education certificate(s).

For example, an educator who holds an All Grades Music Teacher certificate and who has met the program and test requirements for a Special Education teacher certificate, is eligible to apply for an Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Grades (stand alone only) or Secondary Special Education Teacher certificate.
• Adding an endorsement to currently existing certificate(s) is designed to expand and recognize an educator’s specialty area expertise.
• Endorsements allow educators who have expertise, or want to increase expertise in specific, RIDE designated areas the opportunity to do so.
• RIDE will develop the appropriate skills and competencies for each endorsement area to ensure clear pathways for educators who choose to add endorsements.
• An endorsement certificate is not required by RIDE for assignment in a public school setting.
• Upon Council approval, Reading/Dyslexia and English Language Learners will be the first two areas available for endorsements.
• Beginning June 1, 2019, the Hiring and Assignment Flexibility-20% Rule will go into effect.
• This certification change provides districts with the flexibility to employ a teacher for a maximum of 20% of their teaching time in an area in which they are not certified.
• However, the following conditions must be met prior to placement of an educator to an assignment;
  • The educator must have subject matter content knowledge and skills to teach in that area.
  • This assignment must be mutually agreed upon by administration and the teacher.
  • The superintendent must notify the local union and obtain a waiver from the Commissioner.
• For example, a certified Biology teacher, who has the appropriate content knowledge in the area of physics, may teach one physics class
• OR a certified English teacher, who has the appropriate content knowledge in the area of theatre, may teach one elective class in theatre.
Beginning June 1, 2019, candidates who hold a full valid Massachusetts or Connecticut out of state certificate may apply for a “like” certificate in Rhode Island.

Educators will not be required to take and pass RI tests. However, there are exceptions where an educator is also required to meet additional RI certification requirements.

For example, if an educator holds a Massachusetts Elementary certificate, they may apply for a RI Elementary Teacher certificate without taking and passing the RI tests for this certificate area.

However, if an educator only holds a Massachusetts Elementary Special Education certificate, the educator would not be eligible to apply for a RI special education certificate without holding a RI Elementary Teacher certificate.
• New regulations provide a definition for substitute teachers.
• An individual who holds a Bachelor’s degree, Associate’s degree or has completed a minimum of two years of college towards a four year degree track can be a day to day substitute teacher.
• The qualifications are verified by the LEAs.
• RIDE no longer issues substitute certificates.

• Educators who are placed in long term substitute positions, where they will be in the same assignment for forty-five consecutive days are required to hold the appropriate RI certification.
The one year practical residency or equivalent requirement for pre service teachers will go into effect on December 31, 2022.

This allows RIDE, with consultation from the preparation program providers, to define “equivalent” and time to develop models or examples of what residency programs could look like.

The regulations state “or equivalent” to try to leave room for different ways it could look and we’ll consult with prep programs. The 60 practicum hours says before or after again to simply allow for room for options.

Residency programs options may be varied based on the type of program. For example an MAT program may have a different residency plan than a 4 year undergraduate program.

A key take away to understand is that a residency program may take place over the course of one year or multiple terms depending on the program type.

Someone asked what made us want to have a 1 year residency, the simple answer is to ensure more practical experience in schools. New teachers always report wanting/needing more, administrators always report more practice for new teachers would be better.
Beginning January 1, 2019, LEAs are required to report, in writing, within 15 days of discovery, educators who are dismissed for performance or fitness related reasons. Reasons include:

- arrest, indictment or conviction for any misdemeanor or felony
- allegations of sexual or romantic activity with a child or student
- allegations that the educator has caused physical injury to a child or student due to negligence or malice or
- information that the certified educator is the subject of a report filed with the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System
- Additionally, any educator who has resigned, retired or otherwise separated from employment with the LEA AFTER it became aware of an allegation that the educator engaged in misconduct AND
- any certified educator who the LEA has provided notice of intent to dismiss, suspend or place on leave for misconduct regarding physical abuse or sexual or romantic activity
- reports are made to RIDE and reviewed before any action taken. If there is to be an investigation, educators are notified of the investigation and their due process rights. Information is not stored in the certification file.
- Additionally, LEAs shall report reasons that include but not limited to, arrest, indictment or conviction, sexual or physical allegations
• Thank you for taking the time to review the Certification Regulation slide deck.
• You may also visit the RIDE website to review:
  • Frequently Asked Questions
  • Professional Learning Units Guidance
  • All Slides with Notes
  • Full Text of Promulgated Certification Regulations

We are listening...
Send any additional questions to the Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services at eqac@ride.ri.gov