

**TO:** Superintendents of Schools  
Directors of Endowed and Incorporated Academies  
Directors of Approved Private Special Education Facilities  
Directors of Regional Educational Service Centers  
Directors of Public Charter and Magnet Schools  
Personnel and Human Resource Directors

**FROM:** Nancy L. Pugliese, J.D., Chief  
Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification

**DATE:** September 21, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Changes to Requirements for the Professional Educator Certificate  
and new Professional Development Requirements

As you may know, the General Assembly passed An Act Concerning Educational Reform, Public Act 12-116, which includes substantive changes to the requirements for the professional educator certificate and new requirements for professional development in public schools. The law in its entirety may be accessed at: [Public Act No. 12-116](#)

The following outlines the specific changes that impact current holders of and future applicants for a professional educator certificate and new requirements for planning and implementing professional development programs.

### **Continuation of the Professional Educator Certificate**

Effective July 1, 2012, continuing education units (CEUs) will not be required for applicants requesting continuation of the professional educator certificate. Section 36 of P.A. 12-116 eliminates the requirement for professional educator certificate holders to complete 9.0 CEUs (90 contact hours) during the five-year period for which the professional educator certificate was issued. Anyone applying on and after July 1, 2012, for a continuation of the professional educator certificate will no longer be required to provide verification of completion of CEUs. Form [ED 179 Application for Continuation of Professional Educator Certificate](#) has been revised to reflect this change.

### **Degree Requirements for the Professional Educator Certificate**

Section 36 of P.A. 12-116 requires anyone applying for a professional educator certificate on and after July 1, 2016, to have completed a master's degree in an appropriate subject matter area related to such person's certification endorsement area, as determined by the State Board of Education, in order to be issued a professional educator certificate. The CSDE, in consultation with the Educator Preparation Advisory Council, will be developing a policy related to "appropriate subject matter degrees" and will seek State Board approval for such policy. Once approved, these guidelines on appropriate subject matter degrees will be provided and applied. Principals and administrators may use these guidelines to advise teachers on advanced degrees that will enhance their ability to improve student learning.

## **Program of Professional Development (PD) Requirements**

The following is a summary of Section 39 of P.A. 12-116, subsections (a) through (d), inclusive, pertaining to the mandate for PD. While implementation of professional development as outlined below is not required until 2013-2014, **we strongly encourage district leadership, in collaboration with teacher representatives, to begin the PD planning process during the 2012-2013 school year and begin to align the PD with the individualized teacher needs identified through the current evaluation process.** In addition, it is the responsibility of the individual teacher, in collaboration with his/her administrator, to identify and participate in appropriate professional development activities to address the needs identified in his/her annual evaluation. Districts and teachers should create a log or other tracking method for the professional development that has been completed which may be reviewed and audited by the CSDE going forward.

### **(a) Requirements for PD (effective 7/1/13)**

- Provide a minimum of 18 hours annually of PD;
- Preponderance of small group or individual instructional setting;
- Comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teacher and administrator effectiveness in increasing student knowledge achievement;
- Focus on refining and improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between and among educators;
- Foster collective responsibility for improved student performance; and
- Shall be comprised of professional learning that meets the following criteria–
  - aligns with rigorous state student academic achievement standards;
  - conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by principals; coaches, mentors, distinguished educators, or other appropriate teachers;
  - occurs frequently on an individual basis or among groups of teachers in a job-embedded process of continuous improvement; and
  - includes a repository of best practices for teaching methods developed by educators within each school that is continuously available to such educators for comment and updating.

### **(b) Planning of PD**

- Develop a PD plan for certified employees pursuant to C.G.S. subsection (b) of section 10-220a for implementation starting the 2013-2014 school year;
- Providers may include the board of education, regional educational service center, cooperative arrangement with another board of education or any PD provider approved by the Commissioner of Education;
- The time and location of PD activities shall be in accordance with either an agreement between the board of education and the exclusive bargaining unit or, in the absence of such agreement or to the extent such agreement does not provide for the time and location of all such activities, in accordance with a determination by the board of education; and
- Focus of Activities:
  - determined by each board of education with the advice and assistance of the teachers employed by such board, including representatives of teacher's bargaining unit, in full consideration of priorities and needs related to student outcomes as determined by the State Board of Education;
  - based on results and findings of teacher and administrator performance evaluations, to improve teacher and administrator practice and provide professional growth;
  - improve the integration of reading instruction, literacy and numeracy enhancement, and cultural awareness into instructional practice;

- include strategies to improve English language learner instruction into instructional practice; and
- include during each five-year period a minimum of 15 hours in training in the evaluation and support of teachers for every administrator.

**(c) Attestation to CSDE about PD Program**

- The CSDE will develop a process for districts to provide attestation about planning, qualification of professional development providers, and communication, evaluation and documentation of PD activities. Over the next year, CSDE will work with superintendents/stakeholders to develop this attestation process for implementation in the 2013-2014 school year.
- Districts should communicate to individual educators their responsibility to participate in the PD that is agreed to within the annual evaluation process. Districts will be attesting to the CSDE on the certification application forms that a person has “served successfully.” Included in the determination of “served successfully” will be the review of evidence that the educator has participated in PD in accordance with his/her annual evaluation plan.

**(d) CSDE Audit of PD Program and Fine for Noncompliance**

- The CSDE will develop a process for auditing school district’s professional development programs. If the school district is not in compliance with any provision of section 39 of P.A. 12-116, the State Board of Education may require forfeiture of a sum from a grant payment, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, imposed in the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which noncompliance is determined. The forfeiture may be waived if the noncompliance is determined to be due to circumstances beyond the control of the school district.

**(e) Alliance Districts**

- The CSDE especially requests and requires that Alliance Districts develop plans and protocols for evaluation-informed PD per (d) above.

**Management of Professional Development Data**

Many school districts have purchased and used specific software to manage CEU data. With the legislative changes related to professional development focusing more on individual or small-group job-embedded processes, school districts will need to evaluate their needs to determine whether your current software remains a resource you want to use or whether you require a different approach to managing and tracking this data. Keep in mind that under the new legislation, professional development needs and activities should be based upon findings of teacher and administrator performance evaluations and based on student outcomes. This may be a specific matter you wish to discuss with your teachers to determine how to best document and track professional development activities in an efficient and accurate way.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call our office on the superintendent hotline or e-mail us at [teacher.cert@ct.gov](mailto:teacher.cert@ct.gov).

Thank you for your attention to this important information. We look forward to working with you over the next year to assist you in your planning efforts.

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cc: Diane D. Ullman, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer

Attachment: Public Act 12-116, Section 39