



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Teacher Professional Certificate Q and A

In late April, the legislature passed a bill that significantly changes the way in which teachers earn the professional certificate. While not all the implications of this change have been determined yet, the following information should be helpful to teachers and others affected by the professional certificate.

NEW LEGISLATION

1. Q: What will the new requirements be?
A: As of September 1, 2011, to earn a professional certificate, you must (a) have two years of teaching experience and (b) pass the new professional certificate assessment (portfolio of evidence).
2. Q: Will I still have to complete a university professional certificate program?
A: No. University support will be optional.
3. Q: Does this mean the professional certificate is going away?
A: No. individuals with a residency certificate will still be expected to earn the professional certificate. What's changing is the process for earning the certificate.
4. Q: Will programs still be available?
A: Yes. Some programs are planning to offer support seminars for professional certificate candidates in the same way that some universities offer support programs for National Board candidates. Other universities may only offer it in conjunction with their master's degree.
5. Q: I already have my professional certificate. Does this change affect me?
A: No. Your existing professional certificate will remain valid until the expiration date stated on the certificate. Renewal requires 150 clock hours every five years.
6. Q: Can I still qualify for the professional certificate by earning National Board certification?
A: Yes—that option is still in place.
7. Q: I'm currently in a program—will I have to submit the new portfolio of evidence?
A: No—as long as you complete your program by August 31, 2011, you can be assessed by the university.

8. Q: I'm currently in a pro cert program and have already done much of the work—will I have to go back and change it?
A: No—the expectations for the work you are producing remain the same as long as you complete the work by August 31, 2011.
9. Q: Does the two years of experience have to be in Washington?
A: Unknown at this time--the legislation does not address this question, so it will be up to the Professional Educator Standards Board to determine this.
10. Q: Under the new rules, will a Professional Growth Team still be required?
A: Unknown at this time--the legislation does not address this question, so it will be up to the Professional Educator Standards Board to determine this.

NEW PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT

1. Q: What will the portfolio measure?
A: The new portfolio process will measure whether a candidate for the professional certificate has met the standards and criteria established by the Professional Educator Standards Board for that certificate.
2. Q: Are the standards and criteria changing?
A: No.
3. Q: How will the new portfolio process be conducted?
A: Teachers will complete three portfolio entries, as prescribed by the state assessment. In these three entries, they will be asked to provide student work and classroom instructional evidence from their teaching that addresses the professional certificate standards and criteria. Their portfolio entries will then be reviewed by trained outside evaluators to provide a score.
4. Q: How does this differ from the assessment of evidence that university programs currently do?
A: The new process is similar in many respects: the standards and criteria are identical, and the collection and analysis of evidence in the portfolio are also very similar. The main difference is that portfolios will be assessed by trained evaluators using an assessment process that meets high standards of validity and reliability.
5. Q: When will teachers submit the portfolio?
A: Teachers can register to take the assessment anytime prior to the expiration of their residency certificate (but typically during their third or fourth year of teaching

in Washington schools). There will be two windows of time each year for teachers to submit their portfolio entries.

6. Q: What if I don't meet the standard? Can I resubmit the portfolio?

A: Yes, but you must pay a fee for re-submitting and scoring the entries that did not meet standard.

7. Q: If I meet standard on some of the entries but have to resubmit portions, can I get my professional certificate or a renewal of my residency?

A: No—all entries must meet standard before the professional certificate can be awarded, and there are no provisions for additional renewals under the new process.

8. Q: What will the process cost?

A: The cost will be determined at the Professional Educator Standards Board meeting on May 20-21.

9. Q: Where can I learn more about the new portfolio of evidence?

A: The entries, writing guidelines, and rubrics can be viewed on the Professional Educator Standards Board website at www.pesb.wa.gov. Note: these are *drafts* that will not be finalized until piloting has been completed.

10. Q: Can I take the assessment prior to 9/1/11?

A: Yes—the assessment will be available by January 1, 2010.

11. Q: If I submit the portfolio before September 1, 2011, do I still have to complete a university program?

A: At the moment, the rules still require completion of a program for anyone applying for a professional certificate prior to September of 2011. It is *possible* that the PESB may amend the rules to allow using the portfolio rather than a program prior to September of 2011, but this is uncertain at this time.

12. Q: If the option becomes available, I'd like to qualify for the professional certificate by submitting the portfolio rather than doing the program, but my certificate expires in June of 2010. Would it be a good idea to submit the portfolio?

A: Probably not—it might be possible to do so, but there would be some risk involved, in that final support materials (entries, rubrics, exemplars, etc.) will not be available until piloting has been concluded later this fall. That would leave a rather narrow window of opportunity for successfully preparing and submitting the portfolio, which will be administered only once before June, 2010.

CERTIFICATE STATUS

1. Q: How do these changes affect my certificate status?

A: The changes do not automatically change your certificate status; they just change the process by which you complete requirements for the professional certificate. However, you should keep your expiration date in mind as you consider your options—as always, *maintaining the certificate is the responsibility of the holder*.

2. Q: I'm concerned about being able to complete my pro cert requirements before my certificate expires—what options do I have?

A: The options depend on your certificate history; people in different categories have different options:

--When the residency teacher certificate is first issued, it has no expiration date until the individual has completed two years of teaching and has signed a contract for a third year in the same Washington school district, state-approved private school, or state agency providing education services to children. Individuals who are still in this category have plenty of time to consider their options.

--After the contract is signed for the third year, the certificate acquires a five-year expiration date. The expectation is that the professional certificate will be attained before the residency certificate expires.

--If the professional certificate has not been earned and the expiration date is approaching, teachers may qualify for a two-year renewal if they are enrolled in a professional certificate program.

--If the professional certificate has not been earned and the individual is not eligible for a professional certificate program (i.e., is not teaching), he or she may receive a one-time five-year renewal by having completed 15 quarter-credits (10 semester credits) since the residency was first issued.

--Note: teachers may use only *one* of these two renewal options before receiving a professional certificate.

--In general, what all this means is that under current certification practices you can have up to nine years of teaching under the residency certificate before running out of all renewal options.

3. Q: My residency certificate had a five-year expiration date when I first got it. Why didn't I receive an undated certificate?

A: Certification policy changed in 2005, so residency certificates received in 2005 or earlier may have a five-year expiration date if you did not apply to have the date changed. However, the certification office at OSPI will retroactively apply the two-year undated policy, effectively extending your expiration date by two years.

4. Q: I can't remember whether I had my certificate reissued—how do I find out?

A: You can e-mail the certification office at OSPI: cert@k12.wa.us.

5. Q: I'm most of the way through my pro cert program and just found out I may be RIFed. Is there a way to complete the program even though I may not have a classroom?

A: In some cases, yes, especially if you've collected all or most of your evidence. In other cases, it may not be possible. Consult with your university pro cert advisor to see what the possibilities are.

6. Q: I haven't yet completed a professional certificate program, and I just got RIFed. My certificate expires next summer. What options do I have?

A: The PESB will consider an emergency WAC change at its May meeting that would grant teachers a two-year certificate extension if they have been RIFed or will not be teaching next year for other reasons.

OTHER

1. Q: I'm an administrator or ESA who needs to do Pro Cert for that role—does this affect me?

A: No. The current changes apply only to the *teacher* professional certificate.

2. Q: Will administrator and ESA programs be changed later to use a similar process?

A: There are no current plans to do so.

For additional information:

For questions regarding the new portfolio of evidence, contact pesb@k12.wa.us

For questions regarding pro cert requirements, contact profeduc@k12.wa.us

For questions regarding your certificate status, contact cert@k12.wa.us

For questions regarding requirements in the pro cert program in which you're enrolled, contact your advisor or the program director

If you wish to enroll in or learn more about a pro cert program, contact information can be found at <http://www.k12.wa.us/certification/Teacher/ProCert-AvailablePrograms.aspx>