

July 2022

Pennsylvania Amends Regulations for the Certification of Personnel in Chapter 49

On April 23, 2022, the final form amendments to Chapter 49: Certification of Professional Personnel became effective upon publication in the [Pennsylvania Bulletin](#). The [process to update Chapter 49 began](#) in November of 2018 when the Secretary of Education presented recommendations for amendments to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. The Secretary's recommendations were informed by multiple stakeholder convenings, along with a [report on certification research and recommendations prepared by the Learning Policy Institute](#).

PSEA provided input in the process and was a major driver of many of the changes in the [final form amendment](#) that was adopted by the PA State Board of Education. The final-form amendment has two stated aims: “conforming the Chapter to changes in State statute” and “enhancing educator preparedness by establishing new training requirements related to culturally responsive and sustaining education (CR-SE), structured literacy, and professional ethics.” Most amendments are technical amendments to align provisions of Chapter 49 with statutory changes to the [Public School Code of 1949 \(24 P.S. §§ 1-101—27-2702\)](#) and update and clarify ambiguous language.

Certification

- PDE will grant **school psychologists credentialed in another state** who also hold National Association of School Psychologist certification a Level II certification upon application. [49.65(d)]
- **Educational Specialist, Supervisory, and Administrative certification** can be conferred to individuals who hold another state’s comparable credential and who have two years of successful experience in the area for which they are applying and qualifying scores on the appropriate content area test. This provision already exists for Instructional certification. [49.65 (f)]
- **State approved community college courses are acceptable to meet Level II certification requirements** if the credits meet all other credit requirements. College credit acceptable for conversion to the Instructional II Certificate can be earned at a state-approved associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degree-granting institution. [49.84(a)]

Letters of Equivalency

- **For educators who hold a Career and Technical Instructional I or II certificate and are seeking a Letter of Equivalency for Baccalaureate Degree**, the 18 semester-hour credits that must be earned through a four-year institution can now be completed at any point during the 90 required credits rather than only during the final 30 credit requirement. [49.191(1)]
- **For educators who hold an Instructional I or II, Education Specialist I or II, or Career and Technical Instructional I or II and are seeking an Equivalency for Master’s Degree**, a minimum of 18 of the 36 required graduate credits must be earned in the content area of an applicant’s certification area(s) at a college or university approved to offer graduate work. No more than 18 of the 36 graduate credits required may be satisfied through in-service programs approved by the Secretary for meeting master's equivalency requirements. [49.191(1)]

Pre-K Counts

- Emergency permits are now available to PreK Counts program providers. [49.31]
- Service in a PreK Counts program setting is charged against the six-year validity period of a Level I certificate. [49.82(a)]

Professional Education Requirements

Revisions to Chapter 49 relating to professional education focus on continuing professional education for current educators, preparation of aspiring and pre-service educators, and induction of newly certified educators. These changes include new requirements for training on professional ethics, structured literacy, and Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education (CR-SE).¹

Current Educators. The revisions to [Chapter 49](#) require that school entities expand their professional development plans to “include training in CR-SE and professional ethics for all educators, as well as training in structured literacy for educators who hold instructional certificates in Early Childhood, Elementary/ Middle, Special Education PreK—12, English as a Second Language and Reading Specialist” in order to meet Act 48 requirements.

Aspiring and Pre-Service Educators. The updated Chapter 49 requires the Department of Education to report annually to the State Board of Education on the status of certification in the Commonwealth. Significant changes to the requirements for educator preparation and initial certification now include the following:

- Preparation for preservice educators must include training in **professional ethics and CR-SE**, including mental wellness, trauma-informed instruction, cultural awareness, and technological and virtual engagement.
- Instruction in “structured literacy” is required for individuals pursuing the following certificates: Early Childhood; Elementary/Middle; Special Education PreK—12; English as a Second Language; and Reading Specialist.

Newly Certified Educators. The [Chapter 49 revisions](#) update the requirements for induction of newly-employed educators. Previously, induction programs were required to span an educator's first year of employment; however, the revisions require induction supports to span the first TWO years of an educator's career and include training on CR-SE.

PDE has announced that provisions for CR-SE, professional ethics, and structured literacy training requirements and induction plan changes are not immediate implementation priorities at this time.

For More Information

[PDE's Chapter 49 Implementation](#) page provides additional details on all of the items discussed in this *Advisory*.

For information about specific certification requirements related to an employee, PSEA members should contact their UniServ Representative. For general information about the revised provisions of Chapter 49, PSEA members can contact PSEA's Education Services personnel: Dr. Gina Gullo (GGullo@psea.org) for policy inquiries, Ms. Judith Petruzzi (jpetruzzi@psea.org) for Special Education inquiries, or Dr. Christopher M. Clayton (CClayton@psea.org) for certification inquiries.

¹ CR-SE is defined in the [Chapter 49 Annex](#) as: “Education that ensures equity for all students and seeks to eliminate systemic institutional racial and cultural barriers that inhibit the success of all students in this Commonwealth – particularly those who have been historically underrepresented. Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education encompasses skills for educators including, but not limited to, approaches to mental wellness, trauma-informed approaches to instruction, technological and virtual engagement, cultural awareness and any emerging factors that inhibit equitable access for all students in this Commonwealth.”