



ACT 48 UPDATE

Changes in Public School Code

November 2016

Two amendments affect the continuing professional education requirements of Pennsylvania's school professionals. The first allows for the carryover of Act 48 hours from one compliance period to another. The second extends every certificate holder's compliance period by one year.

Carryover -- The Public School Code was amended to allow a carryover of Act 48 hours from one compliance period to another when a professional meets certain requirements. (24 PS Sec. 24-12-1205.2)¹

The requirements are:

- The certificate holder has met the current five-year cycle continuing professional education requirement--180 hours, or six credits of collegiate study, or six credits of continuing professional education courses or any combination of items listed.
- Continuing professional education credits or hours earned in excess of the number needed for the prior cycle can be rolled over into the next five-year cycle to a maximum of fifty (50) hours.
- The excess hours being rolled over were earned in the final two years of the cycle from which they are being carried forward.
- The new cycle began after July 13, 2016, the date the Public School Code was amended to allow for the carryover.

¹ Text of the amendment:

If, during a professional educator's five-year compliance period under this section, a professional educator satisfactorily completes continuing professional education credits or hours in excess of the number of credits or hours required under subsection (a), any excess continuing professional education credits or hours satisfying the requirements of this section that are completed during the final two years of a professional educator's five-year compliance period up to a maximum of fifty (50) hours of continuing professional education programs, activities or learning experiences, or any combination of collegiate studies, continuing professional education courses or other programs, activities or learning experiences equivalent to a maximum of fifty (50) hours, shall be credited to the professional educator's continuing professional education record for the next succeeding compliance period.

Compliance period --The Public School Code was further amended to extend “each professional educator’s current continuing professional education compliance period” by one year. Note. This is a one-time only extension. After this compliance period, the compliance period under the statute is five years.

The same amendment provided school districts an additional year to submit their professional development plans to the Secretary of Education for approval. The legislation, which was sponsored by Representative Wentling, was signed by Governor Wolf on November 2, 2016 to become effective immediately.*

PDE’s Responsibilities

PDE will be responsible for maintaining Act 48 records and enforcing compliance. It should automatically extend the compliance period in its Professional Record Management System better known as PERMS. PDE, also will be responsible for rolling over eligible hours within their system. At this time, we are not aware of any action members need to take to have this roll over occur. PDE is required to notify professionals no later than twelve months prior to the end of a professional educator’s compliance period with the number of credits or hours needed for the professional to comply with Act 48.

Watch for the Pennsylvania Department of Education to publish a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document.

Certificate Holders’ Responsibilities have not Changed

“Whenever a professional educator moves from the address named in the application for State certification or from the professional educator’s current address, such professional educator shall notify the department and provide the department with the most current address. Notification shall be made in a form and manner determined by the department.” (PDE).

Recommended Practice—Check your Progress

Each professional has his or her own cycle based on the year that they were hired or when Act 48 was established. Every certificate holder’s compliance cycle is found in their PERMS data file along with the number of hours that they have accrued during the cycle. Professionals can access their data with their unique Professional Personnel ID number (PPID). PSEA recommends that professionals check their status several times during each compliance cycle to make sure they are on schedule for achieving their goal by the end of the cycle. These records are found on the PDE website under the tab “teachers and administrator” found at the top of the front page of the website www.education.pa.gov.

* Text of the amendment:

Beginning on the effective date of this subsection and notwithstanding any other provision of this section, each professional educator’s current continuing professional education compliance period under subsection (a) shall be extended by one year. This subsection shall expire one year from its effective date (24 PS Section 12-1205.2).

Resources

PDE provides courses yearly which can be found on the SAS portal at www.pdesas.org. The courses are found under the teacher effectiveness button and are provided by Teachscape.

PSEA is an approved Act 48 provider and for the second year is offering online courses for hours. These can be found in the member's only section of the PSEA website by going to www.psea.org/onlinelearning. These courses are a benefit of membership and are free and available 24/7. Courses successfully completed within the PSEA online system are uploaded to PDE within 60 calendar days.

PSEA offers Act 48 courses through PSEA Region offices for those who prefer face-to-face trainings. Either contact your region office or check the region's online link for upcoming professional development.

For additional information contact Bernie Miller in the Education Services Department bmiller@psea.org.