

## Teacher Certification Update

At this time, we wanted to provide you with an update on the impact of the new teacher certifications requirements on Barrington teachers. After conducting a thorough review of the new teacher certification requirements, we are pleased to announce that Barrington Public Schools (BPS) has already incorporated the vast majority of the certification requirements in our practice. In addition, through Frontline, BPS has provided teachers with a dynamic tracking tool for the development and tracking of their professional learning plans.

New resources available related to December 2018 certification regulations

Educators interested in learning more about the newly promulgated certification regulations may choose from a variety of options available on the [certification page](#).

Brief videos – These YouTube videos are ideal for educators looking for information on a specific topic (e.g. renewal)

Frequently Asked Questions – This document is organized by topic and includes answers to some of the most common questions.

Professional Learning Units Guidance – This document includes information about the approval and tracking of PLUs as well as the PLU submission process.

PowerPoint – This PowerPoint presentation provides an overview of the changes.

Regulations – This packet includes all regulation language related to certification.

We hope that these resources support educators as the new certification regulations go into implementation. If you have additional questions that are not addressed in the resources above, please the Educator Quality mailbox at [EQAC@ride.ri.gov](mailto:EQAC@ride.ri.gov).

[RIDE Guidance Document for certifications expiring in 2020](#)

## Adapted Message from the Commissioner of Education

After more than a year of discussion, many informal meetings with interested stakeholders, four hearings, 14 public meetings, and nearly 400 pieces of written feedback, the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education voted unanimously on Tuesday to approve updated educator certification regulations.

The majority of these changes **go into effect January 1, 2019, unless otherwise noted**. The changes include:

- Increasing hands-on experience for teacher candidates from 12 weeks of student teaching to a one-year residency or equivalent experience over the course of the program. (December 31, 2022);

- **Starting with certificates that expire in August 2020**, phasing in a requirement for ongoing professional learning for certified educators. (August 2020).
  - Teachers seeking **professional or advanced certificates** will be required, once fully phased in, to complete the equivalent of **20 professional learning units annually**. Professional learning communities – teachers helping teachers – are an allowable activity to fulfill this requirement.
  - Teachers seeking **initial certificates** will be required to complete, once fully phased in, the equivalent of **30 professional learning units annually**. The higher number of PLUs for beginning teachers will support efforts to increase the kinds of induction, mentoring, and coaching activities that we know are impactful as teachers enter the profession.
- Awarding full reciprocity to certified teachers from Massachusetts and Connecticut in most certificate areas.
- Establishing endorsement areas on teacher certifications, or demonstrated areas of competence short of a full certification, with initial endorsements established in reading/dyslexia and English language learners. (Effective Date TBD)
- Aligning teacher degree requirements in **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** with industry expectations, supplemented with additional teacher preparation program coursework.
- To be consistent with the certification requirements of all school-based clinicians, requiring a **nursing degree for certification as a Registered School Nurse**, with supplemental school-based practice competencies to be acquired during the period of the initial certification.

**The regulations also include provisions:**

- Ensuring **principals** participate in the process that determines/defines their salary, benefits, and conditions of employment, resulting in a written agreement
- Establishing a streamlined pathway for educators to add **bilingual/dual language certification to ESL certification or add ESL certification to bilingual/dual language**.
- Establishing an **Expert Residency Shortages Preliminary Certificate** for individuals who have a bachelor's degree and have demonstrated subject-matter competency in the shortage area.
  - In shortage areas, giving teachers with relevant career experience or expertise seven years to earn certification – a three-year window with a four-year renewal, while the teacher is provided with mentoring support by the district – as opposed to seven one-year renewals. (Effective date TBD)
- Establishing **cultural competence as a shortage area** in the Rhode Island educator workforce, thereby opening an alternate recruitment pathway. RIDE will work with the field to develop a definition of and competencies for cultural competence, which must be brought back to the Council for approval before implementation. (Effective date TBD)
- Allowing certified teachers to be employed for a maximum of 20 percent of the time in a subject or grade level for which he or she does not hold a certificate, provided there is evidence of competence and the **Superintendent and teacher mutually agree**.

Superintendents must obtain a waiver from the Commissioner and notify the local union prior to requesting the waiver.

- **Recognizing National Board Certification, advanced degrees from institutions of higher education, shortage area certification, and national recognitions such as Milken Award, State Teacher of the Year, and Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching (PAEMST) as conditions for advanced certification**, provided that the educator still acquires the necessary professional learning units.
- Requiring LEAs to develop, in collaboration with employed educators, a **professional learning plan and to conduct a needs assessment for professional learning**.
- Eliminating the requirement for **certified special education directors** to also hold principal certification.
- Adding the **school business administrator certification** as a shortage area.
- Clarifying **substitute teacher requirements** to define the difference between a day-to-day substitute and a long-term substitute as an individual who is employed, on a temporary basis, for fewer than or more than 45 consecutive days in the same assignment, and allowing those with an associate's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, or two years of college completion on track to a four year degree, may serve as a day-to-day substitute teacher.
- LEAs must notify RIDE within 15 days of any **arrest, indictment or conviction of a certified educator for any misdemeanor or felony, as well as any allegations regarding physical abuse or sexual or romantic activity**. (Effective immediately)

[The full list of changes can be viewed on the RIDE website](#), where you can also learn more about the process to develop these regulations.

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Do we already meet the 30 Professional Learning Units (PLUs) a year for new teachers and 20 PLUs for teachers with professional and advanced certification?**
  - a. On average a teacher who is present for all professional development days in Barrington engages in up to 36 in-house professional development activities during our 187 teacher days. Note that some of these activities do not count as PLUs, such as work on safety like CPI training or parent-teacher conferences under the new certification requirements.
  - b. In addition, the majority of Barrington teachers engage in activities that would be eligible for PLUs through focused common planning/ professional learning community (PLC) time that include professional learning and engagement in protocols such as calibration and looking at student work.
  - c. Finally, the vast majority of Barrington teachers engage in professional learning outside of the school day to improve their practice and for the purpose of salary movement and teacher leadership.
  - d. See the section below on PLUs for activities that are generally allowable and those that are not.
2. **What other structures do we have in place that support the new certification plan?**

- a. Barrington already reimburses and supports advanced learning through such activities as advanced coursework and National Board Certification.
  - b. The Frontline System has the capacity to add the tracking necessary for teachers to submit PLU activities for District approval and RIDE acknowledgment for certification purposes.
  - c. BPS provides rigorous, job-embedded induction for teachers new to the profession and mentoring for teachers new to the District.
  - d. BPS provides opportunities for formal and informal teacher leadership.
- 3. What are the next steps for BPS?**
- a. Refining our process for gathering feedback for professional learning
  - b. Adapting the Frontline forms and tracking mechanisms for teacher PLU plans, unit tracking, and documentation for certification
- 4. Can I submit work I completed this year for my PLUs?**
- a. Yes, The units need to be completed annually beginning in January 2019, unlike the cumulative hours for maintaining lanes and credits for lane changes, which can accumulate over time.
- 5. What should I do if I have any further questions?**
- a. Email questions to [Paula Dillon](#) and she will seek the answers and provide available for all teachers.
- 6. What is a professional learning unit (PLU)?** The response comes from Lisa Foehr from RIDE. Section 1.8.5 Professional Learning Units
- a. Professional Learning Units (PLUs) are accrued for the purpose of demonstrating ongoing professional learning. The accumulation of these units is a requirement for renewing educator certificates. These units represent ongoing learning and are earned as a result of professional learning activities that are designed to increase educator effectiveness. Ongoing learning is an important and necessary responsibility of educators as they maintain the knowledge and skills needed to educate students.
  - b. Educators are responsible for the completion of all PLUs, as PLUs are a condition of the renewal of educator certificates. LEAs may, in accordance with LEA discretion and/or local agreements, make available some or all of these PLUs for its employed educators.
  - c. Each LEA that employs educators shall develop, in collaboration with the employed educators, an LEA professional learning plan that includes the provisions outlined below.
    - i. Identification of the needs and interests of all educators based on the analysis of student data, educator evaluation information, surveys and needs assessments.
    - ii. Alignment to educator needs as well as district and school needs through review of district strategic plans, school improvement plans, surveys, and other information.
    - iii. Examples of allowable activities, consistent with these regulations.

- iv. Mechanisms for the approval of educator professional learning consistent with these regulations and the local resolution of disputes.
  - v. Structures and plans to ensure opportunities for professional learning activities that take place within the school context over time and are ongoing, including but not limited to, data analysis meetings, student work review teams, curriculum implementation teams, improvement cycle activities, induction activities, mentoring activities, and structured professional learning communities rather than only reliance on one-time activities.
  - vi. Alignment and differentiation of professional learning to ensure opportunities that are relevant to teachers' certified areas, administrators and support professionals.
- d. All educator PLUs for employees of an LEA shall be approved by the superintendent of the LEA or his/her designee, and once the LEA professional learning plan is operative, consistent with the LEA professional learning plan. In any instance where these regulations and the LEA professional learning plan are in conflict, these regulations shall take precedence. PLUs for superintendents shall be approved by the chair of the school committee. The Commissioner of Education shall have the authority to approve specific PLU offerings for all Rhode Island certified educators.
- e. **Activities for Professional Learning Units**
- i. Site-Based Professional Learning activities such as induction activities, mentoring activities, structured Professional Learning Communities, data analysis meetings, local workshops, lesson study, student work review sessions, curriculum implementation teams and other site-based activities designed to improve teaching and learning
  - ii. Structured coaching that involves trained coaches working with colleagues on focused objectives through observation and feedback cycles. Coaching may take the form of induction coaching for beginning teachers or peer coaching and instructional coaching.
  - iii. Proficiency-based Learning and Micro-credentials activities that require the educator to demonstrate proficiency in a new skill by submitting evidence of mastery. Micro-credentials often require educators to submit evidence to third-party providers for review.
  - iv. University coursework at accredited institutions of higher education.
  - v. National Board Certification is a recognized form of professional learning that may be used to accumulate units. Educators may receive units for completing individual components even if the certification is not achieved.
  - vi. External Conferences or Workshops led by external organizations encompass a wide range of learning opportunities. Short-term or stand-alone workshops can be counted for limited units.
- f. Activities that may count toward the accumulation of professional learning units are those that develop subject matter/content knowledge, pedagogical

knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum implementation knowledge or enhance educator effectiveness. These activities may be facilitated in many ways, including, but not limited to, third parties not regularly employed by the LEA and other educators regularly employed by the LEA such as a professional learning community focused on a professional problem of practice.

- g. **Activities that do not directly relate to improving educator practices, such as general logistics, school daily operations, safety training, and some committee work do not qualify for professional learning units. These are important activities for schools but are not considered professional learning.**
- h. Assigning Unit Values to Activities- In order to recognize hours-based and competency-based professional learning experiences, RIDE will use professional learning units as its measure for documenting professional learning. Conversions will be needed to accommodate different learning activities.
  - i. One (1) hour of a professional learning activity is equal to one (1) professional learning unit. For tracking purposes, rounding to the nearest half-hour is appropriate.
  - ii. One (1) college credit is equal to fifteen (15) professional learning units.
  - iii. One (1) demonstrated competency in proficiency-based or competency-based learning is equal to five to ten (5-10) professional learning units, determined by the Superintendent based on the rigor of the competency expectations.
  - iv. **National Board Certification activities:**
    - 1. One (1) component is equal to forty-five (45) professional learning units.
    - 2. Completion is equal to one hundred eighty (180) units.
    - 3. Renewal is equal to ninety (90) units.
- 7. RIDE will continue to study research-based competency approaches to certification renewal and will make future recommendations that reduce the reliance on a number of units and emphasizes growth in professional practice.
- 8. RIDE will engage with teachers unions and LEA leadership to provide model Professional Learning Plans and to review and evaluate the quality of professional learning experiences.
- 9. **Record Keeping and Documentation**
  - a. Educators must maintain records of all activities and make them available upon request by RIDE. All records must attest to participation by the educator in the activity and the professional learning units earned.
  - b. Employers verify locally that educators met renewal requirements. Documentation of verification shall be provided to the educator for certification renewal.
  - c. Educators must submit employment verification forms to RIDE as part of the renewal process.

## **10. Audits of Professional Learning Units**

- a. In order to ensure the efficacy of the professional learning unit system, RIDE will audit renewal applications each year.
- b. Educators selected for audit must submit documentation for all activities submitted for certificate renewal.
- c. Failure to submit required documentation will result in non-renewal of certificates.

#### 11. What if I am Life-Certified?

- a. If you are **life-certified and only life-certified**, you do not need to track or submit PLUs
- b. If you are life-certified in one or more areas, and you have other certifications that you plan on keeping that are not life-certifications, these requirements for PLUs apply.

#### 12. Do you need PLUs for each certification?

- a. No, your total PLU requirements satisfies the PLU requirements for all of your certifications. For example, if you hold an advanced certification in math, a professional certification in Reading, and a professional certification in administration, you would completed 20 PLUs per year, not 60

### RIDE FAQs 1/23/2019

#### FAQs about the Certification Regulations: Professional Learning Units and renewal

The Certification Team will be regularly releasing guidance documents and announcements through upcoming field memos that address frequently asked questions we have received about the changes to the certification regulations.

Below are four questions about using PLUs for certification renewal:

- ***Can I use professional learning from the 2018-2019 school year to renew my certification in 2020?*** Yes. Educators who hold certificates that expire on August 31, 2020 will be required to submit Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for renewal. Educators are able to use professional learning units completed during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years to meet certification renewal requirements. Remember, LEAs approve the professional learning and will verify completed PLUs for the 2020 renewal.
- ***If I hold two or three certificates, do I need to double or triple the PLUs I complete?*** No. The total PLUs required does not increase if more than one certificate is held by the educator.
- ***If I hold a Life Certificate, do I need to complete PLUs?*** If you hold only Life Certificates, no. However, if you hold Life and Professional certificates and are using them in your assignment, you would need to complete PLUs.
- ***My certificate expires in 2019. Do I need to complete and submit PLUs?*** No. The new requirements go into effect for certificates that expire in 2020 and beyond.

A comprehensive overview of the changes in certification can be found on the [Certification website](#).

## Professional Learning Units (PLUs) Phase-In Initial 3-year certificates\*

The amount of professional learning units required will be phased in between 2020 and 2025. Beginning in 2020, applicants will submit the professional learning units outlined in the chart below.

Year of Certificate Expiration/Renewal	Formula to Pro-rate Units	Total Units to Be Completed for Renewal
2020	1x20	20
2021	2x20	40
2022	3x25	75
2023	3x25	75
2024	3x25	75
2025	3x30	90

## Renewal of Initial (3-year) Certificates

Not employed* during the 3 years	Employed* fewer than 3 years	Employed* fewer than 3 years with leave of absence	Employed* all 3 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PLUs</li> <li>• Renew as 3-YR Initial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PLUs</li> <li>• Renew as 3-YR Initial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-rated number of PLUs based on years worked</li> <li>• Letter confirming Leave status</li> <li>• Progress to 5YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate number of PLUs (See Phase-In chart)</li> <li>• Progress to 5-YR Professional</li> </ul>



# Professional Learning Units (PLUs) Professional 5-year Certificates

Individuals who hold an Initial Certificate that expires between 2020 and 2025 and are issued a Professional Certificate between 2020 and 2025 will submit the professional learning units outlined in the chart below.

Year of Certificate Expiration/Renewal	Formula to Pro-rate Units Per Year	Total Units to Be Completed for Renewal
2025	5x20	100
2026	5x20	100
2027	5x20	100
2028	5x20	100
2029	5x20	100
2030	5x20	100

## Renewal of 5-year Professional Certificates & Progression to 7-year Advanced Professional Certificates

Not employed* during the 5 years	Employed* fewer than 5 years with leave of absence	Employed* all 5 years	Employed* all 5 years and Eligible for Advanced Certificate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PLUs</li> <li>• Renew as 5-YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-rated number of PLUs based on years worked</li> <li>• Letter confirming leave status</li> <li>• Renew as 5-YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate # of PLUs (See phase-In chart)</li> <li>• Renew as 5-YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate # of PLUs</li> <li>• 5 years of employment</li> <li>• Meet any one aspirational benchmark</li> <li>• Progress to 7-YR Advanced Professional</li> </ul>

## Renewal of 7-year Advanced Professional Certificates

Not employed* during the 7 years	Employed* fewer than 7 years with leave of absence	Employed* all 7 years	Employed* all 7 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PLUs</li> <li>• Renew as 5-YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-rated number of PLUs based on years worked</li> <li>• Letter confirming leave status</li> <li>• Renew as 5YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate # of PLUs (See Phase-In chart)</li> <li>• No aspirational benchmark</li> <li>• Renew as 5-YR Professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate # of PLUs</li> <li>• Employed for 7 year period</li> <li>• Meet any one aspirational benchmark</li> <li>• Renew as 7-YR Advanced Professional</li> </ul>

**Additional Questions to Ask Yourself - if you answer yes, it is most likely an acceptable activity.**

General categories are listed below that might help everyone understand what can count for PLUs. Does the activity improve, enhance or increase any of the following: • Subject matter/content knowledge and skills • Pedagogical knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge and skills • Curriculum implementation knowledge and skills • Enhance educator effectiveness

### **Some RIDE Examples**

• Site-Based Professional Learning such as induction, structured PLCs, lesson study and student work analysis • Coaching involving trained coaches utilizing observation / feedback cycles • Proficiency Based Learning such as micro credentials • University Coursework at accredited institutes of higher education • National Board Certification • 3rd party facilitated Workshops • Note: Activities that do not directly relate to improving educator practices, such as general logistics, school daily operations, safety trainings, and most committee work do not qualify for professional learning units. These are important activities for schools but are not considered professional learning.

**Assigning Value to Activities\* To help translate activities into PLUs, guidance is provided for how to convert common professional learning activities into units.**

- 1 hour of a professional learning activity = 1 PLU
- 1 college credit = 15 PLUs
- 1 demonstrated competency = 5-10 PLUs
- 1 component of National Board Certification = 45 PLUs
- Completion of National Board = 180 PLUs
- Renewal of National Board = 90 PLUs