

CSPG No. 24
July 1, 2004

APPROPRIATE CERTIFICATION IN CHARTER SCHOOLS IN PENNSYLVANIA

1. The Charter School Law requires that at least 75% of a charter school's professional staff hold appropriate State certification. The federal No Child Left Behind Act, however, now requires that charter school teachers must hold at least a bachelor's degree and must demonstrate competency in the core academic areas in which they teach. Competency must be demonstrated in accord with state's definition of highly qualified as through Praxis content tests.
2. Appropriate certification is required of the 75% of charter school professional staff who are assigned to instructional or administrative functions during the school day. Such duties are: Selection of learning materials and the planning or conducting of teaching and learning experiences; direction of certificated professional-level staff involved in planned courses, programs and services for students; responsibility for direct interaction with pupils in curricular activities or in pupil personnel services.
3. Appropriate certification required to qualify an individual for assignment is determined by the school entity through a position description (job description) that lists specific duties to be performed/fulfilled. A planned course in which course content is clearly identified as a particular curriculum and is also identified to organizational grade level will aid in the construction of a position description.
4. In the event of an audit citing a position assignment as an irregularity, the school entity is responsible for presenting evidence to the Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation to support the fact that the assignment is appropriate and the duties are not reserved in whole or in part to another existing certificate. If the integrity of an existing certificate is breached, PDE must sustain the citation.
5. The school entity is responsible for maintaining a copy of professional staff member's position description in the personnel files. These files will be utilized in certification audits.
6. The following titles can be utilized when considering the nature of planned courses, programs and services:

- Traditional course where the delivered instructional content results in graduation credit being awarded. An instructional certificate exists and is required to provide instruction in the content area. For example: Mathematics is the traditional course being taught, mathematics credit is awarded to the student and a math certificate is required of the instructor.
 - Non-traditional course where the delivered instructional content results in graduation credit being awarded and a certificate exists. For example: Course entitled Diet and Nutrition; credit awarded-health; health certificate required of the instructor.
 - Student Service/Program- A service or program for which no graduation credit is awarded and a certificate to provide such services exists.
 - Special Service/Program – A service or program for which no graduation credit is awarded and no certificate to provide such services exists.
7. Appropriate certification requirements applies to all professional-level staff irrespective of: the source of the funds for the employee's salary; the length or duration of such assigned duties and functions; the employee's status as a temporary professional, professional or substitute.
 8. A "homebound instruction" teacher is governed by the same certification regulations as all other teachers. When regularly employed professional staff cannot be assigned to homebound instructions, persons on the substitute roster holding appropriate certification may be used. If no certified person is available, an emergency certificate may be issued to qualify a person to teach homebound students.
 9. Professional certification is not a consideration in assigning persons to services rendered outside the regularly established instructional day, i.e. extra-curricular activities, for incremental salary on supplemental contracts.
 10. When a school entity incorporates any or all parts of a title of a certificate issued by the Department of Education into a professional assignment, such titling implies that the assignment is reserved to a particular certificate.
 11. School entities can, as required, establish a specific prerequisite to a certificated position, as well as special training, education, experience, skills or abilities that a person in a stated position must possess to perform the assigned duties.

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PROFESSIONAL ASSIGNMENT FOR WHICH NO CERTIFICATE CURRENTLY EXISTS

This Certification and Staffing Policy Guidelines (CSPG) document contains all appropriate certifications required in Pennsylvania. Appropriate certification required to qualify persons for educational assignments is determined by planned course content or student services being provided. The Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation, Pennsylvania Department of Education, reserves the right to determine which certificate meets position description activities.

Certification is not required of a person assigned to a locally-titled non-educational school position, provided the assignment includes no duty or function reserved to a public school certificate or Letter of Eligibility issued by the Department of Education. Examples are: Business Manager; Director of Human Resources; Director of Food Service; Director of Transportation; Director of Adult Education.

A school entity may create a professional assignment for which no existing instructional, educational specialist, supervisory or administrative certificate currently exists, when necessary. However, the school entity is responsible for determining that the assignment duties, responsibilities and functions are not reserved in whole or in part to any of the already available certificates.

A position description for the intended professional assignment must be created and planned work duties must be evaluated to ascertain whether they are already within an existing certificated area.

The school entity is responsible for maintaining a copy of such a position description for certification audit purposes. This copy should be retained in the personnel file of the person assigned. In the event an assignment is cited as an irregularity during a certification audit, the school entity is responsible for presenting evidence to the Bureau of Teacher Certification and Preparation to support the fact that the assignment is appropriate and the duties are not reserved in whole or in part to any existing certificate.