



STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Education

January 12, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** City and County Superintendents of Education

**FROM:** Eric G. Mackey *EGM*  
State Superintendent of Education

**SUBJECT:** Teacher Shortage: Educator Preparation and Certification Updates

I have heard from many local education agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) regarding the impact that the teacher shortage is beginning to have on our state. To immediately increase the quantity of teachers available, I asked members of my staff and the education community to offer suggestions that would assist LEAs and IHEs with their recruitment and hiring efforts. We received a lot of good feedback and will begin implementing quite a few of the items very quickly. Some suggestions will take time for research and/or thoughtful execution; however, below are some items that the Office of Teaching and Leading has begun to work on. Further correspondence will be forwarded to LEA and IHE certification officers as application forms and documents are updated.

**Additional Teaching Field Approaches**

One of the current requirements for the Additional Teaching Field, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Additional Teaching Field-Degree Equivalent, and the CTE Additional Teaching Field-Professional Certificate Approaches is verification of two full years of full-time classroom teaching experience. As of the date of this memorandum, the experience requirement is being eliminated.

**Advanced Pay**

The Alabama State Department of Education has updated its interpretation of the advanced pay law to include that any advanced degree earned from a senior institution that was regionally accredited at the time the degree was earned may be recognized towards advanced pay **if the degree major was in any area of education**. To date, there have been several degrees that have been denied due to generality of the degree major earned (e.g., curriculum and instruction, secondary education). Under this updated guidance and with submission of the attached revised Verification of a Higher Degree (VHD), the LEA is welcome to reapply for educators who were previously denied; however, **the advanced pay will not be retroactive**. Additionally, all other advanced pay options will remain available.

**Certificate Reciprocity**

As of the date of this memorandum, subject-area testing for applicants through Certificate Reciprocity is being temporarily suspended.

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**Certificate Renewal (Reinstatement)**

For individuals seeking to reinstate a Professional Educator Certificate or Professional Leadership Certificate that has lapsed for more than 12 months, the Praxis subject assessment will no longer be the only allowable option. As of the date of this memorandum, the Praxis or one of the other reinstatement options may be used.

**Conditional Certificate in a Teaching Field Approach**

Additional P-12 and 6-12 teaching fields will be added to this approach. The application forms will be updated for the 2022-2023 school year with available teaching fields.

**Emergency and Career and Technical Temporary Certificates**

If only one area was requested at the time the certificate was issued, the LEA may request a second area at any time during the valid period of the certificate. The valid period will remain the same and the new area will be added upon request. An email to your certification specialist will suffice.

**GPA Requirement**

Effective January 1, 2022, alternative programs, and approaches where a 2.75 overall GPA is required, the minimum overall GPA requirement will be changed to 2.50. This will be effective for the following approaches: Career and Technical Certificate to a Professional Educator Certificate, Conditional Certificate in a Teaching Field, Early Childhood Development, Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field, and Speech Language Pathology Assistant (Level I).

Effective January 1, 2022, the required minimum overall GPA of 2.75 will be changed to 2.50 for individuals seeking admission to an Alabama Alternative Class A Program or a Class B Program.

The alternate Praxis score will continue to be required for those who have an overall GPA of 2.00 to 2.49. Individuals with an overall GPA of less than 2.00 will not be eligible to use the alternate Praxis score.

**Special Education**

An alternate route leading to the Class B Professional Educator Certificate in Collaborative Special Education for Grades 6-12 is being created and should be available for the 2022-2023 school year.

EGM:SYH

Attachment: Verification of a Higher Degree Form (1/2022)

cc: Deans of Colleges of Education  
Mrs. Angela Martin  
Mr. Chuck Marcum  
Dr. Jimmy Hull  
Mrs. Shanthia Washington

Dr. Jayne A. Meyer  
Dr. DaLee Chambers  
Mr. J. Jason Swann  
Mrs. Jessica Sanders  
Ms. Shavon Y. Harris



# Verification of a Higher Degree

(For individuals who hold a valid Alabama educator certificate.)

Questions regarding advanced pay should be sent to [payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu](mailto:payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu).

Local Education Agency	
Name of Professional Educator <i>(for whom form is being completed)</i>	
Social Security Number	
Institution of Higher Education	
Regional Accrediting Agency <i>(Institution of higher education must have been accredited by one of the agencies indicated at the time the degree was earned.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Association of Colleges and Schools <input type="checkbox"/> New England Commission of Higher Education <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities <input type="checkbox"/> Middle State Association on Colleges and Schools <input type="checkbox"/> Western Association of Schools and Colleges <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
Degree Earned	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> Education Specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate
Major/Concentration Area of Degree Earned <i>(as indicated on the official transcript)</i>	

Please check **ONE** option regarding the professional educator named above.  
 The options on this document are based on Act #2016-198 accessible via the following link:  
<http://arc-sos.state.al.us/ucp/B16117AA.BAU.pdf>

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option A</b>	Earned an advanced degree <i>prior to</i> July 1, 2017 <i>Any degree area is acceptable.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option B</b>	Earned initial graduate credit ( <i>grade of C or better</i> ) toward the advanced degree <i>for which this verification request is being submitted prior to</i> July 1, 2017, and earned the advanced degree <i>on or after</i> July 1, 2017. <i>Any degree area is acceptable. This option is not applicable if coursework completed for a previous degree was used towards fulfilling requirements for earning the degree for which verification is being requested.</i>
<p><b>Option A or B should be used if applicable.</b></p> <p><b><i>If Option A or B is checked, please STOP, sign the form, and submit it along with the official transcript.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>If Option A or B cannot be used, please see Options C through H and select only ONE, sign the form, and submit it along with the official transcript.</i></b></p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option C</b> <i>Subject matter of advanced degree shall be liberally construed for these teaching fields.</i>	Earned an advanced degree in a field of study for which the educator is properly certified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Teacher K-6</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Special Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Middle School (<i>English language arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science</i>)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Middle School Generalist</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Alternative Achievement Standards</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option D</b> <i>Use for any area not included in Option E.</i>	Earned an advanced degree <b>in the same area</b> for which the educator currently holds a valid Alabama certificate.
	Certificate Area:



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<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option E</b>	Earned an advanced degree in: <input type="checkbox"/> Arts (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts) <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Education Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> English for Speakers of Other Languages <input type="checkbox"/> Language(s) other than English <input type="checkbox"/> Library Media <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> School Psychometry <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Speech-Language Pathology <input type="checkbox"/> STEAM <input type="checkbox"/> STEM <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option F</b>	Holds an advanced degree and ONLY a valid: <input type="checkbox"/> Career and Technical Temporary Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Conditional Certificate in a Teaching Field <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education Transitional Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Interim Employment Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in Library Media <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate in School Counseling Instructional Support Area <b>OR</b> Teaching Field:	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option G</b> <i>This option may be used if Options (A-F) are not applicable; Option G may be possible if all criteria are met.</i>	Earned an advanced degree and is a teacher of a critical shortage area <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching field was reported by LEA to the ALSDE as critical shortage area <b>and</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Letter is being submitted for approval as this is a critical shortage area for the LEA and the individual does not fit into any of the other advanced pay options. Critical Shortage Area for LEA:	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Option H</b> <i>Option added January 2022; advanced pay is not retroactive.</i>	Earned an advanced degree and the major is <b>in an area of education</b> not covered by a preceding option (subject to approval) Area of Education:	

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*LEA Superintendent*

\*\*\*\*\*FOR ALSDE USE ONLY\*\*\*\*\*

- \_\_\_\_\_ The degree indicated above has NOT been verified because the ALSDE has not been able to confirm that the institution is regionally accredited.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The ALSDE cannot verify the degree indicated above because it does not meet any of the options listed above nor does it meet \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The ALSDE has verified and recognizes that this professional educator received the aforementioned degree from a regionally accredited institution.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*For the Alabama State Department of Education*

Mail this form and an original, official transcript\* to:  
 Alabama State Department of Education  
 Educator Preparation Section  
 Post Office Box 302101  
 Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

NOTE: The Highest Degree for Pay is posted on the Certification Portal. The Certification Portal will indicate the degree and the date the degree was recognized, as well as the date when the degree was earned. This form will not be returned after the Alabama State Department of Education has recognized a higher degree from a regionally accredited institution.

\*An original, official transcript is enclosed because the Certification Portal verifies that the transcript is **not** on file with Educator Certification.