THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

ROBERT W. RUNCIE
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Transforming Education: One Student At A Time

Referral

Date Closed: March 13, 2014
Date Received: March 13, 2014
Date of Correspondence: March 07, 2014

NO. 14 -805

☐ RUSH

TO: Amanda Bailey
Elisa Calabrese
Jose Dotres

☐ Board Member Referral requires a one-week turn-around from date issued.

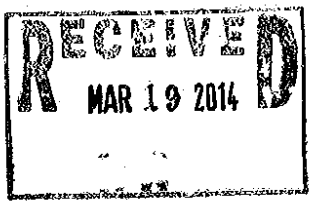
☐ Referral requires a **one-week** turn-around from date issued unless otherwise noted.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM: Pam Stewart

Florida Department Of Education

☐ Referral requires a **two-week** turn-around from date issued unless otherwise noted.

SUBJECT:
Renewal Credit In Teaching Students With Disabilities



ACTION:
Take appropriate action.

CC:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Pam Stewart
Commissioner of Education

Contact Information:
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850-245-0431
David.LaJeunesse@fldoe.org
DPS: 2014-12

MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents
School District Assistant School Superintendents
Private School Organization Contacts

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: March 7, 2014

SUBJECT: Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities

At the January 2014 State Board of Education meeting, revisions were adopted to the Educator Certification Rule, Rule 6A-4.0051, Florida Administrative Code, entitled Renewal and Reinstatement of a Professional Certificate. These rule revisions became effective on February 25, 2014.

Beginning July 1, 2014, any applicant for renewal or reinstatement of a Florida professional certificate must earn at least one (1) semester hour of college credit or the equivalent 20 inservice points of training in the instruction of students with disabilities (SWD). Amendments to section 1012.585, Florida Statutes (F.S.) in 2013, authorize the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt this special training provision in rule and to establish general implementation criteria. The rule revision also clarifies that credit used to satisfy requirements for the initial Florida professional certificate cannot be used for renewal of the professional certificate.

The rule revision does not change the requirement that an applicant for renewal must earn a minimum of six (6) semester hours of college credit or the equivalent 120 inservice points for retention of coverages on the professional certificate. Additionally, an applicant for reinstatement must complete six (6) semester hours of college credit or the equivalent 120 inservice points during the five (5) years immediately preceding reinstatement of an expired Florida professional certificate. In both cases, the credit in the instruction of SWD will now be necessary as a portion of the overall required credit for applications received on or after July 1, 2014.

In addition to college credit or inservice points, a passing score earned on a subject area exam may be used to satisfy the credit required in the instruction of SWD. As per existing rule language, a passing score earned on a subject area exam during the certificate validity period may be used to renew the corresponding coverage on the professional certificate. Therefore,

when an appropriate coverage for the instruction of SWD is shown on the valid professional certificate, the applicant for renewal may use a passing score on the Florida Exceptional Student Education K-12, Hearing Impaired K-12, Visually Impaired K-12 or Speech-Language Impaired K-12 subject area exam to satisfy renewal credit for that coverage and to satisfy the new requirement for credit in the instruction of SWD.

For more information on the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations, please visit http://www.fl.nesinc.com/.

To address specific implementation issues, questions and answers are included in the attached technical assistance paper.

For more information about these rule revisions, please visit the Educator Certification website at www.fldoe.org/edcert. If you have questions or need assistance related to these rule changes for Educator Certification, please contact Mr. David LaJeunesse at David.LaJeunesse@fldoe.org or 850-245-0431.

PS/dlj

cc: Human Resources Directors
Personnel Directors
Certification Partners
Exceptional Student Education Directors
Professional Development Directors

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DPS: 2014-12
Date: March 7, 2014

Pam Stewart
Commissioner of Education

Technical Assistance Paper
Renewal Credit in Teaching Students with Disabilities

Summary: This technical assistance paper is intended to assist Florida educators with implementation for one of the amendments passed by the 2013 Florida Legislature in Senate Bill 1108, related to exceptional student education (ESE). This legislation made changes to the process for renewal of professional certificates (section 1012.585, Florida Statutes (F.S.)).

On August 28, 2013, the department issued DPS Memo 2013-105, *2013 Legislation – Senate Bill 1108*, to summarize key provisions of this legislation and provide general questions and answers addressing implementation issues.

Section 1012.585, F.S., was amended to include:

- Beginning July 1, 2014, an applicant for renewal of a professional certificate must earn at least one college credit or equivalent inservice points in teaching students with disabilities;
- An applicant must earn a minimum of six semester hours of college credits or the equivalent inservice points for certificate renewal, and this requirement for credit in teaching students with disabilities may not increase the total renewal credit requirement; and
- The State Board of Education is permitted to adopt rules for implementation of this section.

Subsequent to legislative enactment, the department initiated the formal rule development process to adopt necessary changes to rules impacted within Chapter 6A-4, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), for administration and implementation of the changes by Educator Certification.

Chapter 6A-4.0051, F.A.C. revisions were adopted by the State Board of Education at its meeting on January 21, 2014. These rule revisions became effective on February 25, 2014.

Contact: David LaJeunesse, David.LaJeunesse@fldoe.org, 850-245-0431

Status: ☒ New Technical Assistance Paper
☐ Revises and replaces existing Technical Assistance:

Issued by the
Florida Department of Education
Division of Public Schools
www.fldoe.org/schools

Questions and Answers Regarding Implementation of CS/SB1108, Section 9, and Changes to Educator Certification Rule 6A-4.0051, F.A.C. Renewal and Reinstatement of a Professional Certificate

For simplicity and clarity, the following abbreviations or substitutions will be used, as appropriate, throughout the content of this technical assistance paper.

ESE = exceptional student education

SWD = students with disabilities

SWD credit = training in the instruction of students with disabilities

Educators Who Must Earn SWD Credit:

1. **Does the requirement for SWD credit apply to all educators who hold valid professional certificates covering any subject?**

Yes. All educators who apply to renew a valid, Florida professional certificate on or after July 1, 2014, must satisfy the SWD credit requirement. This requirement depends on when the application is submitted for renewal of the certificate, not on the validity period of the certificate to be renewed.

2. **Does the requirement for SWD credit apply to professional certificates expiring on June 30, 2014?**

The requirement does not apply if the renewal application is received no later than June 30, 2014. The SWD credit will not be required for educators whose applications to renew their Florida professional certificates are received prior to July 1, 2014. However, an applicant whose certificate expires on June 30, 2014, who submits application for **late renewal** after the certificate expires, on or after July 1, 2014, will be expected to have completed the required SWD credit within appropriate timeframes for certificate renewal.

3. **When and how will the requirement for SWD credit apply for renewal of professional certificates expiring after June 30, 2014?**

See response to question 1. An applicant whose certificate expires after June 30, 2014, and applies for renewal on or after July 1, 2014, will be expected to complete the required SWD credit within appropriate timeframes for certificate renewal.

4. **Does the requirement for SWD credit only apply to general educators who do not have an ESE coverage on their professional certificates?**

No. Beginning July 1, 2014, the SWD credit will be required of all applicants for renewal of their Florida professional certificates.

5. **Will special educators with degrees in ESE and/or ESE subject area coverages or endorsements on their professional certificates be exempted from this requirement?**

No. Beginning July 1, 2014, the SWD credit will be required of all applicants for renewal of their Florida professional certificates, including special education professionals who may have earned

degrees in ESE or who already hold one or more ESE subject area coverages or endorsements on their certificates.

6. Does the requirement for SWD credit apply to private school teachers or other educators?

Yes. The provision for SWD credit is required of all applicants for renewal of their Florida professional certificates irrespective of employment status. Therefore, this requirement applies to anyone who seeks to renew a certificate including, but not limited to, private school teachers, teachers in juvenile justice programs, Florida certified teachers in other states or countries, and Florida certified educators not employed in elementary or secondary schools.

7. Will the SWD credit be required for educators granted an extension to their professional certificates based on special provisions for time spent in military service?

An educator may be granted an extension to the validity period of a Florida professional certificate based on special provisions for the period equal to time spent in military service. The SWD credit is not required for an educator to be granted such an extension. Based on regular provisions for renewal on or after July 1, 2014, however, when the educator subsequently applies for renewal of the extended certificate, s/he will be expected to complete appropriate renewal credit, including the SWD credit, within appropriate timeframes.

8. Will the SWD credit be required for educators granted an extension to the validity period of their professional certificates based on other special provisions?

An educator may be granted an extension to the validity period of a Florida professional certificate based on extraordinary extenuating circumstances. The SWD credit is not required for an educator to be granted such an extension. Based on regular provisions for renewal on or after July 1, 2014, however, when the educator subsequently applies for renewal of the extended certificate, s/he will be expected to complete appropriate renewal credit, including the SWD credit, within appropriate timeframes.

9. Does the requirement for SWD credit apply to reinstatement of an expired professional certificate?

Yes. An educator who applies on or after July 1, 2014, to reinstate an expired Florida professional certificate will be expected to complete six (6) semester hours of credit within the five (5) years immediately preceding issuance of the reinstated certificate, which must include the one (1) semester hour of SWD credit.

10. Does the requirement for SWD credit apply to renewal of district certificates (i.e., substitute, non-degreed vocational, etc.)?

No. The provision for SWD credit applies to all individuals who apply to renew Florida professional certificates on or after July 1, 2014. Many instructors for vocational, career or adult education programs are qualified as in-field based on district certificates. The provision for SWD credit does not apply to district certificates. However, district school boards may revise local policies to require the SWD credit for renewal of district certificates.

Note: It is the responsibility of each applicant to obtain current information regarding renewal requirements from the employing Florida school district, nonpublic school or the Bureau of Educator Certification.

Acceptable SWD Credit:

11. How many SWD credits or inservice points are required?

One (1) semester hour of college credit or 20 Florida inservice points in teaching students with disabilities is required to satisfy the SWD credit requirement for certificate renewal. Inservice points must be awarded by a school district or other entity with an approved Florida Master Inservice Plan (MIP).

12. Can any combination of college and/or inservice credit be used to satisfy the requirement for SWD credit?

Yes. Any combination of acceptable SWD credit may be used to satisfy the one semester hour or 20 inservice points necessary for certificate renewal.

For example, an approved Florida MIP may award inservice points for Professional Development Alternatives (PDA) modules completed through the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System as one of the options available to satisfy the SWD credit requirement. Some PDA modules may include a varied number of professional learning hours or credits on the instruction of SWD. One or more of these modules may be completed and, through an approved Florida MIP, the equivalent inservice points awarded to document satisfaction of the renewal requirement for SWD credit. PDA modules may be accessed at http://www.pda-ese.org/.

13. What type of inservice activities and college courses will be acceptable SWD credit?

Each school district will be responsible to ascertain if the content of a college course or professional learning activity completed by a school district employee satisfies the content requirement for SWD credit. That determination must also include the specific number of applicable credit hours or points, since the course/activity may not be wholly focused on teaching SWD.

14. Will any ESE inservice from an approved Master Inservice Plan be acceptable?

Most inservice activities assigned an ESE component number within a Florida-approved Master Inservice Plan address the instruction of students with disabilities and should, therefore, be acceptable to satisfy the SWD credit requirement. However, inservice activities in an ESE area not classified as a disability, such as gifted education, are not acceptable.

15. Will inservice activities that include differentiated instruction in other content areas be acceptable SWD credit?

See responses to questions 13 and 14.

16. Will there be specific SWD content requirements or competencies that must be included in a course or inservice activity to be acceptable?

See responses to questions 13 and 14.

For example, college courses or professional learning activities aligned to the *Competencies and Skills Required for Teacher Certification in Florida* for the Exceptional Student Education K-12 subject area exam are acceptable if the content focuses on the instruction of SWD. Likewise,

courses or activities aligned to the Council for Exceptional Children Professional Standards may also be acceptable if the content focuses on the instruction of SWD.

17. Will courses appropriate to satisfy specialization requirements for an ESE subject coverage be acceptable?

Yes, when earned within appropriate timeframes for certificate renewal and if the content focuses on the instruction of SWD. However, courses or inservice activities in gifted education are not acceptable.

18. Will credit earned to add an ESE endorsement to the professional certificate be acceptable?

See response to question 17.

19. Will courses or inservice activities in gifted education be acceptable?

No. Courses or inservice activities in an ESE area not classified as a disability, such as gifted education, are not acceptable.

20. May I use credit from an ESE course I took as part of my degree to satisfy the SWD credit requirement?

No. College courses taken to satisfy requirements for the initial Florida professional certificate may not be used for renewal of the certificate. Renewal requirements must be completed during the last validity period of the certificate and prior to its expiration.

21. Will a college course or equivalent inservice earned from training prior to July 1, 2014, be acceptable?

Yes, when earned within appropriate timeframes for certificate renewal and if the content focuses on the instruction of students with disabilities.

SWD Credit Equivalencies and Offerings:

22. Will a passing score on an exceptional student education subject area test satisfy the SWD credit requirement?

A passing score on a Florida exceptional student education subject area exam (i.e., Exceptional Student Education K-12, Hearing Impaired K-12, Visually Impaired K-12 or Speech-Language Impaired K-12) that corresponds with the specific exceptional student education coverage on the certificate is equivalent to three (3) semester hours of renewal credit and satisfies the requirement for SWD credit. The exam must be passed within acceptable timeframes.

For example, a passing score on the Hearing Impaired K-12 subject area exam satisfies both three semester hours of renewal credit and the SWD credit requirement when the Hearing Impaired coverage is on the professional certificate to be renewed.

23. Will any valid National Board certificate meet the new SWD credit requirement along with all state renewal requirements?

An Exceptional Needs Specialist certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) satisfies Florida certificate renewal requirements, including the

SWD credit, when the Florida professional certificate includes a subject coverage in instructing students with disabilities. An NBPTS certificate without an Exceptional Needs Specialist area does not satisfy the new renewal requirement for SWD credit.

24. Will there be a single course that everyone must take to satisfy the SWD credit requirement?

No. See responses to questions that follow.

25. Will an online course be developed to meet the SWD credit requirement?

A 20-hour, non-facilitated online PDA module is under development. The Bureau of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services anticipates state-wide availability of this online course offering sometime in summer 2014. Once available, this module may be adopted by school districts or other entities to award inservice points through an approved Florida MIP.

26. Will additional courses or professional learning activities be developed to satisfy this SWD credit requirement?

There are many opportunities funded by the department that are currently available to assist educators in meeting the SWD credit requirement for certificate renewal. Some of these courses appear in the Professional Development Portal for Educators of Students with Disabilities which can be accessed at http://pdportal.florida-ese.org/. Some courses available through the portal have already been identified in district Master Inservice Plans under ESE component numbers.

For example, Associate Centers of the FDLRS have made sure, whenever possible, that appropriate PDA course offerings are listed in local district Master Inservice Plans. In any case, each school district will be responsible to ascertain if the content of a college course or professional learning activity completed by a school district employee satisfies the content requirement for SWD credit.

27. The SWD credit for renewal requires only one (1) semester hour college credit, but most colleges or universities offer courses for three (3) semester hours credit. Will it be possible to "bank" SWD credits for use in future certificate renewal?

No. There was no latitude provided within current legislation to permit the use of excess SWD credits in subsequent renewal of the Florida professional certificate.

28. Will any educators be permitted two successive validity periods to satisfy the SWD credit requirement?

No. In current legislation, the requirement to earn SWD credit must be completed within each renewal period of the Florida professional certificate.

29. Are the state colleges and universities planning to offer any 1-credit courses to satisfy the SWD credit requirement?

Course offerings are determined by each college or university based on numerous factors including state and community needs for academic and career education. Employers or educators should contact colleges or universities directly to inquire about available course offerings to meet the SWD credit.

Note: It is the responsibility of each applicant to obtain current information regarding renewal requirements from the employing Florida school district, nonpublic school or the Bureau of Educator Certification.

30. What will be acceptable to document SWD credit earned to satisfy this requirement?

For Florida public and charter school employees who submit application for renewal to the district, the district must retain appropriate documentation of each educator's inservice record clearly indicating the dates earned and points awarded for inservice completed through its approved Master Inservice Plan, including the acceptable SWD credits earned to satisfy this requirement.

For individuals who submit application for renewal to the Bureau of Educator Certification (BEC), the educator is required to submit official documentation to satisfy requirements, including the SWD credit requirement. Acceptable documentation shall be one or both of the following:

- an official transcript from an accredited or approved postsecondary institution or the American Council on Education (ACE); and/or
- a Verification of Inservice Points form (CT116 or CT116-E) completed by a school board or other entity with an approved Florida Master Inservice Plan. The form must clearly indicate the specific dates earned and number of points awarded for inservice completed, including the appropriate SWD credit earned.

31. How may the SWD credit earned be applied toward fulfillment of renewal requirements?

Credit earned in any exceptional student education area, which includes SWD credit, may be applied to fulfill credit for renewal of any subject specialization area issued on the Florida professional certificate.

For example, a three (3) semester hour college course in teaching students with disabilities satisfies the SWD credit requirement and three (3) of the six (6) semester hours of renewal credit, for any coverage on the Florida professional certificate, such as Elementary Education, Mathematics, Chemistry, Music, etc.

32. Is this a one-time requirement or will the SWD credit be required for every future professional certificate renewal cycle?

In current legislation, the requirement to earn SWD credit must be completed within each renewal period of the Florida professional certificate.

General Renewal and Reinstatement Procedures and Processes:

33. To whom does an educator submit the application for renewal and reinstatement of the professional certificate?

Florida public school employees, including those in charter schools, are required to submit renewal applications to the school district. All other educators submit applications for renewal of their Florida professional certificates to the Bureau of Educator Certification (BEC). All applications for reinstatement of an expired Florida professional certificate must be submitted to the BEC.

Note: It is the responsibility of each applicant to obtain current information regarding renewal requirements from the employing Florida school district, nonpublic school or the Bureau of Educator Certification.

34. When is an educator eligible to apply for renewal of the professional certificate?

Educators may submit applications for renewal during the last year of the validity period of the Florida professional certificate. An application for renewal is valid for one year from the date received, but requirements must be completed during the validity period and before expiration of the certificate. Florida school employees should contact their employers regarding local policies and procedures for submission of the application for renewal.

35. When must credit be completed to satisfy requirements for renewal or reinstatement of the professional certificate?

Renewal requirements must be completed during the last validity period of the Florida professional certificate and prior to its expiration. An educator may, however, use excess or "banked" inservice training points earned in teaching students with limited English proficiency or teaching reading during subsequent validity periods.

Credit for reinstatement of an expired Florida professional certificate must be completed within the five-year period immediately prior to issuance of the reinstated certificate. If not earned within this five-year timeframe, excess or "banked" inservice points are not appropriate to satisfy the credit required for reinstatement.

36. What amount of total credit is required to renew the professional certificate?

Educators with a Florida professional certificate are required to earn a minimum of six (6) semester hours of college credit or an equivalent 120 inservice points for renewal or reinstatement.

37. What grade must be earned for a college course to be acceptable?

A grade of at least "C" must be earned in each college course used for renewal or reinstatement. A grade of "pass" or "satisfactory" is an acceptable grade.

38. What institutions are appropriate to earn acceptable credit?

College level credits used for certificate renewal or reinstatement must be completed at an accredited or approved institution. College level credits awarded by the American Council on Education are also acceptable.

39. How do I document college course or inservice credit earned?

Only official transcripts may be used to document college course credit for renewal or reinstatement. Grade reports, internet printouts or photocopies of transcripts are not acceptable.

A Verification of Inservice Points form (CT116 or CT116-E) completed by a school board or other entity with an approved Master Inservice Plan may be used to document Florida inservice credit for renewal or reinstatement. The form must clearly indicate the specific dates earned and number of points awarded for inservice completed.

Note: It is the responsibility of each applicant to obtain current information regarding renewal requirements from the employing Florida school district, nonpublic school or the Bureau of Educator Certification.