

Department of Education & Early Development
Office of the Commissioner

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MEMORANDUM NUMBER 2006-05

To: Superintendents

From: Roger Sampson, Commissioner

Date: September 27, 2005

Subject: New Three Level Teacher Certification System

On September 29, 2005, Alaska's certification of teachers becomes a standards-based system. The system is designed to ensure that Alaska's teachers possess both content knowledge and the ability to effectively deliver instruction, which will have a direct impact on raising student achievement.

The new system consists of three levels: Initial, Professional, and Master Certification. Teachers currently holding a Type A teaching certificate will move directly to the Professional level when they renew their current certificate. Teachers currently holding a Provisional, Temporary, Preliminary, Reemployment, or Subject Matter Limited certificate will be issued an Initial Certificate and will be required to meet all of the statutory requirements and timelines associated with the certificate they were originally issued. The changes in teacher certification do not affect educators who hold Type B Administrative or Type C Special Service Certificates.

Under the new system, all teachers seeking certification for the first time in Alaska or those teachers whose certificates have lapsed more than twelve months will be issued an Initial Certificate if they have met the following requirements:

- Hold at least a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education
- Passed a basic competency exam in reading, writing and math: Praxis I; CBEST; or West-B;
- Completed or enrolled in an approved teacher preparation program; and
- Passed a background check.

An Initial Certificate is valid for three years and is not renewable.

During the three years of Initial Certification, a teacher is expected to meet the requirements to move to Professional Certification. Teachers who have met the following requirements will be issued a Professional Certificate:

- Completion of an approved teacher preparation program from which either an Institutional or State Recommendation can be obtained;
- Completion of the required Alaska studies and Alaska multicultural coursework;
- Passing a content area examination; and

- For certificates issued September 1, 2006 and later passing two performance reviews.

Professional Certification is valid for 5 years and may be renewed by taking six semester hours or nine-quarter hours of credit during the life of the certificate. Three of the renewal credits must be upper division coursework.

A Master Certificate is available for those teachers who achieve National Board Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or who have completed two performance reviews and achieved the required score. Master Certification is valid for ten years and may be renewed. A teacher holding Master Certification who does not wish to renew the Master Certification may move to Professional Certification, provided the renewal requirements are met.

The Department of Education & Early Development has issued Initial Certificates to teachers who hold Type A Provisional, Type A Temporary, Preliminary Type Q, Reemployment, and Subject Matter Expert Limited Certificates and is enclosing letters with information about the requirements of the new system with their initial certificate. Those teachers who hold Regular Type A certificates will be sent information as they renew their certificates.

The performance review requirement goes into effect for those teachers who seek initial certification in Alaska beginning September 1, 2006, and later. Teachers who wish to use the performance reviews as a way to become highly qualified under the HOUSSE Provision of No Child Left Behind will be able to begin submitting their videotapes in mid-November.

Further information regarding teacher certification in Alaska and applications are available at the following website: www.eed.state.ak.us/teachercertification/ by emailing tcwebmail@eed.state.ak.us or by calling (907) 465-2831.