



# The Teacher Advisor

HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES — RECRUITMENT & CERTIFICATION COMPLIANCE

Dear teachers,

Welcome to our final issue of the year, brought to you by the Polk County Public Schools Human Resource Services Recruitment and Certification Compliance team!

This year has been filled with a number of unexpected twists and turns. As this school year comes to a close, we cannot thank you enough for your flexibility and willingness to ensure that our students are receiving the very best. On top of providing students with the best education possible, you have also been in contact with us to ensure that you are meeting employment requirements and deadlines. For this, we are grateful.

In this final issue, we've included as much real-time information as possible, including communication that has recently come from the Florida Department of Education, reminders for those with expiring certificates (both temporary and professional), information on being out-of-field, upcoming virtual fairs and events, and much more. Check it out!

Sincerely,  
*Your Friends in Certification*

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Spotlight: Expiring Professional Certificates
- New Teacher News: Upgrading from your Temporary to Professional Certificate
- Useful Tips: General Certification
- Certification FAQ
- Teacher Engagement Corner
- Check for Understanding

***Have a topic you'd like to see covered? Contact us!***  
(Contact information can be found on the last page.)

# NEW TEACHER SEMINARS

Throughout the year, Teacher Engagement has conducted seminars to help support both novice and experienced teachers in four main areas:

- Classroom management
- Trauma-informed teaching
- Higher-order thinking across content areas
- Instructional technology

Each seminar integrated experience from PCPS teachers and offered hands-on breakout sessions for teachers to get ideas to bring back to the classroom. School closures didn't even stop the sessions! Teacher Engagement took to Facebook Live and spotlighted three classroom teachers who were leveraging technology to engage their students in distance learning. If you missed the seminar or want more information on how to integrate technology, reach out to:

- [teacherengagement@polk-fl.net](mailto:teacherengagement@polk-fl.net)
- Kim Motta, Union Academy – Microsoft Teams
- Sam Sokolski, Highlands Grove Elementary – Nearpod
- Katy Holmes, Wendell Watson Elementary – Zoom

# NEW TEACHERS

Help us make the PCPS first-year experience better for future teachers! We'd love to hear the ups and downs of your first year to help us grow. Tell us what works and help us adjust to what doesn't. Sign up for a New Teacher Interview so we can hear your story! We are available through Zoom, Skype, or phone call. To schedule an interview, email [teacherengagement@polk-fl.net](mailto:teacherengagement@polk-fl.net).

## SPOTLIGHT

# Expiring Professional Certificates: Deadline Extended to December 31, 2020

Was your certificate scheduled to expire on June 30, 2020? Due to COVID-19, those on a professional certificate now have until December 31, 2020 to meet and document all renewal requirements. *Please note, the Florida Department of Education is in the process of updating the validity dates of all certificate holders from 7/1/15–6/30/20 to 7/1/15–12/31/20. There are no actions required by the educator/teacher for this update.*

If you have already completed all requirements, it is time for you to complete the steps to renew your certificate!

Visit the certification website to view step-by-step instructions on how to renew your professional certificate: [polkschoolsfl.com/certification](http://polkschoolsfl.com/certification). You can also access the Moodle course "[How to Renew Your 5-Year Professional Certificate](#)."

On our site, we have included information for current employees, former/retired employees, and charter school employees (see screenshot below). Be sure to complete the steps that apply to you!

Professional Certificate Renewal Information		
How to Renew Your Professional Certificate (Current Employees)	How to Renew Your Professional Certificate (Former/Retired Employees)	How to Renew Your Professional Certificate (Charter Employees)
STEP 1 1. Review	STEP 1 1. Review	STEP 1 1. Review
STEP 2 Review the <i>FAQ's</i> and <i>Renewal Checklist</i>	STEP 2 Review the <i>FAQ's</i> for renewal	STEP 2 Review the <i>FAQ'S TO RENEW YOUR 5-YEAR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION</i> under the methods of renewal section.
STEP 3	STEP 3	STEP 3
STEP 4	STEP 4	STEP 4



**Have you already completed these steps but your status still says *pending* or *incomplete*?** No need to panic! This just most likely means that the certification specialists have not gotten to you in their queue yet. Renewals are processed in the order they are received. Once the specialist gets to your application in their queue, they will either notify you if additional documentation is needed, or if everything is complete, they will process your renewal. Once it's processed, you will receive notification that it is complete. You will also receive an email from the FLDOE with your renewed certificate attached.

# Upgrading from Your Temporary to Professional Certificate

*Update: Due to COVID-19, teachers who hold a temporary certificate that was due to expire on June 30, 2020 now have until **December 31, 2020** to complete and document all requirements to upgrade to a professional certificate.*

Do you currently hold a three-year, non-renewable temporary certificate, but you're ready to upgrade to your five-year professional certificate? Before you apply, refer to your Statement of Status of Eligibility (SOE) that was issued to you by the Florida Department of Education to ensure that you have completed all requirements. Once the FLDOE evaluates your application to upgrade, they will either issue your professional certificate or they will send you a letter that outlines the requirements that have not yet been documented in order to receive your professional certificate.

Missing one or more requirements? Use this table as a guide to help fulfill whatever requirements are still incomplete:

Type of Missing Requirement	Information to Complete Requirement
General Knowledge Exam, Professional Education Test, and/or Subject Area Exam	Visit the Florida Teacher Certification Exam website to register for this exam: <a href="http://www.fl.nesinc.com">www.fl.nesinc.com</a> .
Professional Education Competence Program	Meet with your administrative team to ensure you have been assigned a mentor so you can complete the PEC program at your school.
Professional Preparation Coursework	Review your options by visiting: <a href="http://thehub.polk-fl.net/hr/optionstocompletecourses">thehub.polk-fl.net/hr/optionstocompletecourses</a> .
Teaching Experience	When completing your upgrade application, include all teaching experience you have completed.

Follow these steps to apply to upgrade from your temporary certificate to your professional:

- 1) Go to Florida Department of Education's website: [flcertify.fldoe.org/datamart/login.do](http://flcertify.fldoe.org/datamart/login.do).
- 2) Log into your VERSA account.
- 3) Choose "Upgrade to Professional Certificate" and complete the application (be sure to include all coverages that are currently on your temporary certificate).



Teachers on expiring certificates who cannot fulfill their requirements by 12/31/20 can request that their status be reviewed for an extension on their certificate. Teachers can reach out to the District Certification Office at [certificationoffice@polk-fl.net](mailto:certificationoffice@polk-fl.net) **no later than 11/1/20**. The Certification Office will review each teacher's status on a case-by-case basis to determine if they would be eligible to be considered for an extension (if adversely impacted due to COVID19). Please note: Teachers who do **not** meet their requirements by 12/31/2020 and/or do **not** contact the certification office for extension review consideration will **not** be eligible to maintain their status as a B1 teacher for the 20-21 school year and **must be terminated on 12/31/2020**.

# USEFUL TIPS:

## GENERAL CERTIFICATION

### Tip #1 – SWD Certificate of

**Completion:** If you have completed an SWD course for your 20-point renewal requirement, but your points are not being reflected in NetConnect, you can email your certificate of completion directly to [certificationoffice@polk-fl.net](mailto:certificationoffice@polk-fl.net) to document that it is complete.

**Tip #2 – HR call center:** Did you know that the Human Resources department now has a call center for general HR-related questions? The call center is available to assist you with most (if not all) of your questions. Please don't hesitate to reach out directly by email to [hrcallcenter@polk-fl.net](mailto:hrcallcenter@polk-fl.net).

**Tip #3 – ESOL endorsement vs. ESOL coursework:** If you have a Statement of Status of Eligibility that states you must complete Professional Preparation Coursework in "instructional strategies for teaching students of limited English proficiency..." you must complete this course at an institution that awards bachelor's degrees or higher. The ESOL endorsement courses do not fulfill this requirement. *Please refer to your SOE that was issued to you by the FLDOE and visit the [certification web page](#) to view the Options to Complete Coursework flyer.*

**Tip #4 – Adding a subject or endorsement to your teaching certificate:** If you want to add a subject area or an endorsement to your teaching certificate, be sure to visit the [certification web page](#) to ensure you are completing the correct steps. *There is a specific application you must complete with the FLDOE to add a subject or endorsement, so please be sure to follow the directions carefully.*

## CERTIFICATION FAQ

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### *What does it mean to be out-of-field?*

Out-of-field means that a teacher is assigned teaching duties in a class dealing with subject matter that is outside the field in which the teacher is certified.

### *What are the approved out-of-field areas?*

The PCPS-approved areas to go out-of-field in are reading, gifted, educational leadership, and ESOL. If you go out-of-field in reading, gifted or educational leadership, you will need to sign an Agreement to Earn letter (see next question for more information). If you go out-of-field in ESOL, you will be sent a Plan of Study regarding your deadline dates to complete the ESOL Endorsement courses.

### *What is an Agreement to Earn?*

An Agreement to Earn is a letter that is sent to teachers who are placed out-of-field in *all* subjects except ESOL. The letter stipulates the requirements you must complete and specific deadlines to fulfill your out-of-field obligation. Please note: the Agreement to Earn is used for out-of-field areas with the exception of ESOL. If you go out-of-field in ESOL, you will be sent a Plan of Study regarding your deadline dates to complete the ESOL endorsement courses.

*Coming Soon!* Effective for the 2020-21 school year, all Agreement to Earn letters will be sent to teachers through DocuSign. Be on the lookout for this new feature!

### *What is the deadline to be in-field?*

Be sure to reference your **Agreement to Earn** letter regarding your specific requirements and deadline date. Your anniversary date is the date that you will want to pay very close attention to as you have **one year from that date to meet your requirements for the time period listed on your specific Agreement to Earn letter**. Once you've met the specific requirements that are listed on your Agreement to Earn letter, then you must apply to add the coverage to your certificate so that you can be classified as being "in-field." **Note: You will be out-of-field until the coverage is added to your certificate.** Visit the [certification web page](#) when you are ready to apply to add the coverage to your certificate.

If you are out-of-field ESOL, you should have received a **Plan of Study** from the ESOL Office. Your Plan of Study outlines the coursework and the deadline dates to complete each course. Upon completion of your last course, you will be all set to [apply](#) to have the ESOL Endorsement added to your certificate.

# CERTIFICATION FAQ

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## ***What are the consequences for being out of compliance?***

The consequences for non-compliance are listed on your Agreement to Earn letter. These consequences include that you cannot continue in the out-of-field assignment beyond the anniversary date **and** you cannot go out-of-field in any area in the future.

## ***Who do I contact if I am out-of-field?***

<b>Out-Of-Field Category</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
ESOL	Richard Estridge   <a href="mailto:richard.estrIDGE@polk-fl.net">richard.estrIDGE@polk-fl.net</a>
Reading	Stephanie Eiland   <a href="mailto:stephanie.eiland@polk-fl.net">stephanie.eiland@polk-fl.net</a> Kathryn Rutledge   <a href="mailto:kathryn.rutledge@polk-fl.net">kathryn.rutledge@polk-fl.net</a>
Gifted	Emily Mistretta   <a href="mailto:emily.mistretta@polk-fl.net">emily.mistretta@polk-fl.net</a>

## ***What if I already registered for an FTCE exam prior to April 1, 2020 and already paid the fee?***

Testing sites are opening on a very limited basis and testing examinees will be scheduled for testing on a first-come, first-served basis.

Any FTCE registrations made prior to April 1, 2020 are subject to current fees. However, examinees who have paid these fees may cancel registrations up to 24 hours prior to their scheduled test time and receive a full refund.

## ***I completed post-secondary coursework, but I'm not receiving supplement pay yet. What should I do?***

Current PCPS employees seeking compensation for post-secondary coursework completion may now upload an official copy of their transcripts into Staff Portal and/or ARS. If a degree was awarded, the post-secondary degree with a conferral date must be reflected on the transcript that is uploaded.

If you are already receiving a degree supplement (e.g., master's, specialist, doctorate, para college hours) and it is reflected in Staff Portal, it is not necessary for you to resubmit/upload this information. *For more information, please see the email that was sent to all staff on February 26, 2020 or email the HR Call Center at [hrcallcenter@polk-fl.net](mailto:hrcallcenter@polk-fl.net).*

## **Hot Off the Press — Amended Administrative Rules**

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[Click here](#) to view the guidance document received from the Florida Department of Education on administrative rule changes regarding restricted certificates, school counseling, and other recently amended administrative rules pertaining to educator certification.

## **KNOW DIFFERENT?**

Our monthly newsletter *Know Different* showcases what teachers are doing in our district to help other teachers get ideas to use in their own classrooms! You will be amazed at how many innovative ideas are out there! [Check out our latest edition here.](#)

# EMERGE SYMPOSIUM

On February 21, teachers gathered from throughout PCPS to hear other educators speak about their experience and strategies on empathy in the classroom. The night kicked off with a powerful keynote from Adam Smith, 2015 Polk County Teacher of the Year, and continued with engaging breakouts that allowed teachers to take away strategies to put in place in their classrooms the very next week! Take a look at what teachers had to say about this unique learning experience:

- ▶ “When I thought about going to a PD after school, I wasn’t exactly thrilled...but tonight made me completely redefine what I thought professional development was all about! I had such a blast and every part of the evening was something relatable and useful to what I do in my fifth-grade classroom.”  
– First Year Teacher
- ▶ “This was amazing and very helpful! I came in with an open mind, and I learned a lot of things from Harmony on how to work with my students. Thank you to everyone who made this a success, and teaching me, and other teachers, empathy!”
- ▶ “It truly was a FUN night! The food was incredible, and the sessions were highly relevant for me and my school’s needs. I’m glad I decided to come instead of stay home!”
- ▶ “I love that teachers in the classrooms are the speakers! They are real but positive! Great night! I’m leaving feeling so encouraged!”





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# Teacher Engagement on theHUB

Check out what's going on in Teacher Engagement by checking out our page on [theHUB!](#)

Polk County Public Schools  
**theHUB**  
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## Teacher Engagement

Teacher Engagement

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- Reappointment Info
- Salary Information
- Staffing Plan
- Recruitment & Certification
- Compliance
- Substitute Services

**TEACHER ENGAGEMENT**

### What is Teacher Engagement?

Teacher Support      Teacher Leadership      District Culture



**Recruitment and Certification Compliance Team**  
Kim Gooch, Karen Pfister, Christina Porter, Haydee Quinones

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

- 1) **True or false?** The ESOL endorsement program fulfills the ESOL course listed on my Statement of Status of Eligibility.
- 2) **True or false?** You can now upload your own official transcripts to Staff Portal or ARS for compensation for post-secondary degree completion.
- 3) **True or false?** Teachers who hold a temporary certificate must complete all requirements listed on their SOE before they apply to upgrade to their professional.
- 4) **True or false?** Due to COVID-19, the new deadline for all 2020 expiring certificates has been extended to December 31, 2020.

### ANSWERS:

- 1) **FALSE.** The ESOL course listed on your SOE must be completed at an institution that awards bachelor's degrees or higher. The ESOL endorsement program fulfills the out-of-field ESOL requirement with PCPS.
- 2) **TRUE.** You can now upload official transcripts. However, if you are already receiving supplement pay, it is not necessary for you to resubmit/upload this information.
- 3) **FALSE.** You can apply once you've met all requirements listed on your SOE toward the professional certificate or at any time during the last year of your validity period of your temporary certificate, even if all requirements are not yet completed or documented at the FLDOE. The FLDOE will not advise our office of your status for coursework if you have not applied to upgrade to the professional certificate.
- 4) **TRUE.** All certificates (including district-issued) expiring 6/30/20 have been extended to 12/31/20.

## The Teacher Advisor

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**FIND PAST ISSUES ON THEHUB**  
[thehub.polk-fl.net/hr/certification](http://thehub.polk-fl.net/hr/certification)