

The Teacher Advisor®

Polk County Public Schools Human Resource Services Recruitment & Certification Compliance

Dear Teacher,

Does the thought of ‘teacher certification’ make your head throb?
Reach for the cure: the *PCPS Certification Newsletter*.

It’s stuffed with info about **FL Department of Education (FL-DOE)** rules and regulations – changes, reminders, and explanations. Aspirin *optional*.

Your Certification EMTs (er!) Advisors

In Each Issue:

- ❖ ‘Spotlight’ Subject
- ❖ Think you’re cert-savvy? Take our pop quiz
- ❖ ‘Need-to-Know’ Tip for Teachers
- ❖ Handy Hints: Alternatives to the Obvious
- ❖ ‘Where do I find . . .?’ Resource Guide
- ❖ “Dear Agony Aunt” – Auntie answers your FAQs



In the
Spotlight

The Official Statement of Status of Eligibility Pop Quiz #1

(answers: bottom of page 4)

1. With or without a transcript on file, FL-DOE evaluates each application in the date-order received, and clarifies whether the applicant qualifies for a certificate. **(T / F)**
2. Two common nicknames for the ‘Official Statement of Status of Eligibility’ are ‘SOE’ and ‘Statement of Eligibility’. **(T / F)**
3. Every year FL-DOE sends an updated Statement of Eligibility to each teacher on a temporary certificate, listing her/his remaining requirements. **(T / F)**
4. The SOE is valid for two years or until the teacher fulfills all obligations and applies for a professional certificate. **(T / F)**



**POLK COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
STUDENTS FIRST

Upcoming Events

Sept 11 and Oct 16

‘New Teacher Seminar with District Staff’ – Instructional Technology, Professional Development, and Exceptional Student Education (same content/different locations)

Sept: Jim Miles Building –
Oct: Haines City High School

Next Issue “Spotlight Subjects”

- *Renewing An Expiring 2019 Professional Certificate*
- *What is ESSA?*

Huh? Why do I need a Statement of Eligibility?

When an FL-DOE Specialist evaluates your application, s/he compares FL certification requirements to your transcript(s) and supporting documents (i.e. an out-of-state teacher’s license). **Any FL-mandatory item that is missing from your background must be completed. The Specialist creates an SOE to itemize what you must do to earn a certificate.** Typically listed are courses, tests, and teaching experience.

Dear Agony Aunt*

What's up with this OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF STATUS OF ELIGIBILITY? I'm supposed to get a temporary certificate. Is this it?

No, dearie, it's not your temporary certificate! The 'SOE' is a customized list of every requirement you must complete to get your temporary and/or professional certificate. Polk County Schools' Certification Office will request your temporary certificate for you after you're hired. – Auntie

My Statement is confusing. Why describe the course content I need to take? I want course titles!

These days, it's all about options. FL-DOE accepts alternatives to the traditional "college-based teacher preparation + internship" of my youth. Having examined your transcript, DOE makes the required **knowledge** (courses) that **you lack** into the content **you must master** to earn the FL Professional Educator's Certificate. – Auntie

*England's "Dear Abby"

5. Based on individual need, an SOE covers: certificate entitlement; required testing; and professional preparation coursework/teaching experience. **(T / F)**

Interpreting the OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF STATUS OF ELIGIBILITY (aka 'SOE')

The image shows a sample of an 'Official Statement of Status of Eligibility' form from the Florida Department of Education. The form includes the department's logo and name at the top. Below that, it lists the school district as 'LAKELAND, FL 33809' and provides the Florida DOE Number, Applicant ID Number, Processing Date (05/07/2018), and Expiration Date (05/07/2021). A prominent warning states: 'DO NOT DESTROY. PLEASE RETAIN UNTIL ALL REQUIREMENTS ARE COMPLETE'. The form then outlines requirements for issuance, including accreditation and college-level credits. It is divided into two main sections: 'YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A FLORIDA EDUCATOR'S CERTIFICATE AS SHOWN BELOW.' The first section is for a 'Temporary Certificate' (three-year non-renewable) and the second is for a 'Professional Certificate' (five-year). Both sections list specific requirements for English (Grades 6-12) and other criteria. At the bottom, contact information for the Florida Department of Education is provided, including the address (325 W. Gaines Street, Room 201, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0409), website (www.fl.gov), and phone numbers (800-445-6739 for US domestic calls, 850-245-5049 for international calls).

The Statement opens with your **name and personal information** – provides a disclaimer about a school district's right to impose additional obligations -- and *then* the important qualifier:

1. Eligibility

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR A FLORIDA EDUCATOR'S CERTIFICATE

. . . followed by the need for verification of your employment. Relax; your PCPS Certification Specialist has got this. She'll request issuance of your certificate and submit fingerprints, while you celebrate! – **OR** –

YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A FLORIDA EDUCATOR'S

CERTIFICATE . . . break out the books! It's time to prepare for the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE) subject area test that matches (exactly!) the certification subject you applied for. Sign up at www.fl.nesinc.com. When you've passed that, FL-DOE will (in 30+ days!) deem you eligible for the FL Temporary Educator's Certificate.



Hints & Tips

Handy Hint: Scan/fax PCPS the Certification Office your subject area exam unofficial **passing** score report ASAP, so we can consider you a certified teacher before FL-DOE revises your SOE.

2. Testing That May Be Required by Your Statement of Eligibility

<p>Test of General Knowledge <i>Think: achievement</i> By far the most popular way to meet the ‘general knowledge’ (achievement) requirement is by passing the Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) General Knowledge Test (GK). Comprised of four subtests (English Skills, Math, Essay, and Reading)—each of which must be passed—it ensures FL teachers have solid academic skills. Also acceptable is the Graduate Record Exam (GRE)—<i>psst . . . or a combination of the two!</i> Contact PCPS Certification for GRE passing scores & valid test dates, and possible GK/GRE combinations.</p>	<p>Subject Area Examination <i>Think: subject knowledge</i> There are 39 FTCE Subject Area Examinations (SAE) that correspond with an identical FL certification (i.e. the Mathematics 5-9 SAE corresponds with Mathematics 5-9 certification – not with Mathematics 6-12). The exams are aligned with the subject knowledge behind FL Standards (what FL students should ‘know & do’ by subject and grade level) and also evaluate an educator’s knowledge of how-to-teach that content.</p>	<p>Professional Education Test <i>Think: good teaching practices</i> The FTCE Professional Education Test (PEd) evaluates a teacher’s knowledge of classroom competencies, such as: teaching & assessment strategies, planning instruction, creating a learning environment, ethics & professional conduct, continuous professional improvement, and meeting the needs of a diverse group of students—including those with disabilities and ‘English-Language Learners’.</p>
--	---	--



Where do I find . . . Study materials for the tests?

- On the FTCE test registration website at www.fl.nesinc.com (under the heading ‘Prospective Candidates’) *click on* the hotlink: *>How do I prepare for my test?*
- Type **FTCE + test title + study guide** (i.e. FTCE General Knowledge Test study guide) into your Internet browser for names of commercially available materials
- Click <https://polkschoolsfl.com/ace/> for test information and resources provided by the Polk County Schools ACE Program.

Need to Know:

- Pass the entire General Knowledge Test ‘**within one year of hire** under the *FL Temporary Educator’s Certificate*’, if it is an obligation listed on your SOE.
- Because passing ‘within one year’ is a **requirement of FL law**, FL-DOE offers no extensions for illness, accident, or forgetfulness!

3. Professional Preparation and Educational Competence

If Coursework is Specified . . .

For those who lack educational credits, typically **15 semester hours of educational coursework in any/all of the following areas** is indicated on the SOE (full list is below). For persons with some educational credits, only course topics that you lack will appear (also from the list below):

- Classroom Management
- Child and Adolescent Development and Learning
- Educational Assessment
- Effective Instructional Strategies for Diverse Learners including Students with Disabilities
- Instructional Practices in Reading
- Instructional Practices for Teaching Students of Limited-English Proficiency

Several local colleges have online or traditional courses to satisfy these requirements. Unless you participate in an ‘alternative certification program’ (such as *ACE*, *ABCTE*, or *EPI*), you’ll have to take college courses—if your SOE requires them. It’s always a good idea to **email** a list of your choices to FL-DOE for approval.

- Go to www.fldoe.org/edcert and select ‘Staff Contact’ (left sidebar, bottom), then ‘Email Services’.
- Complete the form with your name/DOE # plus: the college name(s), course number(s) with prefix, and course title(s).
- Request advisement well *before* your registration deadline.

Demonstrating Educational Competence

Teachers on a *FL Temporary Certificate* often participate in the **Professional Education Competence (PEC)** program at their school. An *experienced teacher* is assigned to help the new educator adjust and excel, in a manner similar to a teaching internship. When the new teacher has successfully completed PEC, the *District* informs FL-DOE her/his SOE requirement has been met.

Practical Teaching Experience Requirement (PTER) is the credit a teacher earns for one year of public school teaching. It can be used to clear out *1 course requirement* (for a total of 3 semester hours).

Handy Hint: You may access the certification information on file with the District through the [Staff Portal](#).



Please review your *Certification Report Card* carefully to ensure that the District has the most current information on file for you. Updates may be sent to certificationoffice@polk-fl.net.

Hints & Tips

POP QUIZ ANSWERS:

- 1. False**– ‘no transcript, no evaluation’.
- 2. True**
- 3. False** – the SOE is only updated when you move from ‘ineligible’ for a certificate to ‘eligible’ – hang on to your SOE!
- 4. False** – the SOE is valid for three years (or until all requirements are met).
- 5. True**

Questions??

Annissa Wilfalk, Director

Supervises the Recruitment and Educator Quality staff – and spearheads efforts to create a diverse qualified teaching staff for Polk County Schools. She monitors district compliance with federal, state, and local educational regulations. (annissa.wilfalk@polk-fl.net)

Karen Pfister, Senior Coordinator of Teacher Certification

Delivers training re: certification policies & procedures; provides certification advice to high school, middle school, and district-level staff; manages data collection/analysis to accurately reflect teachers' credentials and qualifications. (karen.pfister@polk-fl.net)



Migdalia Alvarez-Morales, Certification Specialist

Assists in hiring & reappointment of elementary teachers and provides certification advisements. Manages the 'Comparable Methods' procedure to ensure ESE teachers benefit from the 'alternative-qualifications' provision of "Every Student Succeeds Act" (ESSA). (migdalia.alvarez-morales@polk-fl.net)



Joanelle Arana, Certification Specialist

Assists in hiring and provides advisements to elementary and industry-trained teachers. Requests issuance of temporary certificates, processes certificate renewals & add-ons, and facilitates Career Technical Education (District) certificates. (joanelle.arana@polk-fl.net)



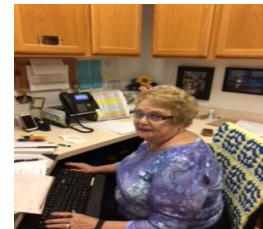
Kimberly Gooch, Certification Specialist

Evaluates credentials of prospective paraeducators; provides assistance in hiring & advises teachers at secondary schools. Handles certificate renewals & add-ons. (kimberly.gooch@polk-fl.net)



Liz Hargis, Personnel Assistant

Creates and updates records related to certification of instructional personnel; scans incoming transcripts and maintains a related database; manages paperwork for individuals in out-of-field assignments; answers phone calls and provides general information about certification procedures. (liz.hargis@polk-fl.net)



PHONE: 863. 534.0781

FAX: 863.534.0737

Forward your improvement suggestions or topics of interest ideas to certificationoffice@polk-fl.net.