

MSAD 75 Certification Council Policy Guide

Local Credentialing Committee and Mentor Program Administration

**Maine School Administrative District No. 75
Topsham, Maine**

Section A - Certification Council Scope

MSAD #75 includes the towns of Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell and Topsham and is composed of five elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. The district's Certification Council serves as the Local Credentialing Committee (LCC) and Mentor Program Administrator. The Certification Council provides support for teachers, guidance counselors, library-media specialists, literacy specialists, special education consultants, speech and hearing clinicians, school nurses and athletic directors.

Section B - Certification Council Composition

As specified in Chapter 115, 9.2 (a-d), the Certification Council will include professionally certified educators, and at least one administrator. Members must have at least three years of educator experience and at least two years teaching experience in the MSAD 75. Member educators must have an overall performance rating of effective or higher and the majority of members must have already completed a five year certification renewal cycle. The chairperson and co-chair person will be members elected from within the council. The certification council may not include school board members of MSAD 75.

The MSAD 75 Certification Council membership will be as follows:

- Superintendent of schools, or designee
- Human resources representative
- 1 building administrator
- 1 teacher/educational specialist Harpswell Community School
- 1 teacher/educational specialist Williams-Cone School
- 2 teacher/educational specialist Woodside Elementary School
- 1 teacher/educational specialist Bowdoin Central School
- 1 teacher/educational specialist Bowdoinham Community School
- 2 teachers/educational specialists Mt. Ararat Middle School
- 3 teachers/educational specialists Mt. Ararat High School

Teachers and/or Educational Specialists on the Certification Council will hold a three-year term. Prior to the end of a member's term, the staff of the school will vote for the individual who it wishes to represent its building; staff members interested in running must meet the qualification requirements outlined above. Newly elected members are invited to the June meeting, but will not have voting privileges until September of that year. Results of elections will be documented in the June minutes.

The administrator will be appointed by the superintendent of schools. The superintendent will set the term of the appointment.

The chairperson and co-chairperson will be elected by the Certification Council at the last meeting of each year to act as chairperson and co-chairperson for the following year. The chairperson will be responsible for certification procedures throughout the district including those endorsed by the Certification Council. The co-chairperson will support the chairperson in their duties and also be able to sign certification documentation for the state in the event that the Certification Chair is unable or unavailable.

If a member is unable to fulfill their term, they should submit a letter to the committee one (1) meeting prior to the effective date of the resignation. The source of their appointment shall be notified, and that body shall select a nominee to fill the unexpired term.

Section C - LCC Roles and Responsibilities

The MSAD 75 Certification Council serves as a Local Credentialing Committee for the State of Maine. The council will provide support services to develop effective educational practice for all certified staff as an element of certification/recertification planning. They will provide the Commissioner of Education with recommendations for educational personnel seeking professional certification, professional renewal or certification advancement.

The Certification Council will have the following responsibilities (Chpt 115, Part 1, 4.2 (a), 9.1 (a-d) and 9.4):

1. Determine whether the requirements for the renewal of a credential required by the state are met.
2. Inform all educators of their credentialing responsibilities and the Certification Council's procedures and forms.
3. Preapprove professional development (through use of the Professional Renewal Plan) that will result in the accrual of credit or contact hours for the purposes of certification renewal.
4. Maintain a cumulative confidential file containing documentation of the accrual of approved hours for certification or renewal and official documentation of progress toward meeting the requirements for a renewal.
5. Make a recommendation to the Commissioner within the Maine Educational Information System indicating whether or not a renewal applicant's certificate should be renewed.

(Please see *Appendix A* for more specific roles and responsibilities of the council members.)

Certification Council meetings will be held monthly up to 10 times per year set in coordination with the chair, co-chair and assistant superintendent. The schedule of meetings will be published by or before the first meeting of the school year. Members are expected to attend at least eighty percent (80%) of the meetings. In the case of poor attendance, a replacement may be selected from the pool of qualified staff. The Certification Council, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, will consider special circumstances.

In addition, the Certification Council members will keep a log of all certification-related activities performed. This log will serve as a timesheet for payment as well as for accountability purposes for the Superintendent.

Section D - LCC Conflict Resolution

All decisions made by the Certification Council will be made in a professional, fair, and equitable manner. In the event that staff members do not follow procedures for recertification, the issue will be brought to the Certification Council for consideration. The staff member may be asked to come before the Council.

If a staff member feels that a council decision is not correct, they should first address this concern with one of the council's building representatives or the chairperson. The concern will then be presented to the council, as a whole, for reconsideration. If the staff member still does not deem the decision satisfactory, they may address the council in person at the next scheduled meeting. For each consideration, consensus will be utilized to determine how procedural discrepancies will be approached and if the council is unable

to reach consensus, a majority vote of the committee will determine the decision.

Section E - LCC Confidentiality

All materials gathered during the course of the certification process are to be considered legally confidential. A confidential digital file will be created for each staff member, which may contain PRPs, evidence of documented hours, transcripts, and other support system documents. These files will be kept secure (see district policy for confidentiality). It is the responsibility of each Certification Council member to respect the individual's rights of confidentiality and only share information on a need to know basis.

Section F - Mentor Program Roles and Responsibilities

Every new staff member to the district supported by this plan will be assigned a mentor whose main task will be to coach and provide guidance and support based on a professional learning community model (the mentor program adheres to Chpt. 180, Section 11). Mentors will assist their mentees in developing collegial professional partnerships as the primary means of professional development. A mentor may serve for a maximum of two candidates at any one time.

(For qualifications and responsibilities of mentors please see *Appendix B - Mentor Program Overview*.)

The Certification Council Chair will work with the PEPG chair and building principals to manage the district's mentor program. The Certification Chair will perform administrative duties related to the program including maintaining records of mentor/mentee pairings, collecting and submitting mentor activity logs and timesheets.

Building administrators will make every effort to match qualified mentors with new educators requiring a mentor using the following prioritizing guidelines:

- 1) Location – School, building
- 2) Impact areas – Content area, grade level, specialization

In the event of a match that does not proceed successfully, a change can be made; the staff member seeking a change shall submit a written request to their building administrator and the certification chairperson.

Every fall the Certification Council Chair will host a mentor training for all district mentors who have been matched with a new hire. For mentors who begin after September due to later hires, the yearly review will be scheduled when/as appropriate. Periodically, additional mentor training will be made available to qualified staff interested in becoming a mentor. On the successful completion of the course, that candidate will be added to the district's mentor list.

Mentors are expected to work with the same mentee for the duration of the mentee's required time in the mentor program (one or two years).

Section G - Educator Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the individual holding a conditional or professional certificate (see *Appendix C*)

to maintain proper certification while employed in MSAD 75. The teacher/educational specialist seeking renewal of a Professional Certificate will develop a Professional Renewal Plan (PRP), approved by the Certification Council, which describes the activities they will complete to acquire the equivalent of six credits (90 hours). Plans must be submitted and approved no later than six months after the effective date of the holder's new certificate. Addendums to a professional plan may be submitted if activities for renewal change; this must be submitted for approval prior to starting the new activity.

In order for a staff member supported by this plan to renew a professional certificate they must complete six (6) credits (90 hours) of work-related study within the five-year certification period (See *Appendix D* for more about the recertification process). Credits may be generated through an accredited college or university, CEUs, contact hours, or an alternative plan (see portfolio description in *Appendix E*) that are aligned with their PRP.

It will be the responsibility of all certified staff supported by this plan to maintain a current certificate while employed by MSAD #75, as well as provide the Certification Council and Human Resources with a copy of the respective document.

Section H - Communication

Each school year during New Teacher Orientation, the MSAD #75 Certification Council Chairperson will provide a brief overview of the district's certification process to new hires. The orientation will describe responsibilities, roles, procedures, available services, and the process for achieving necessary certificates.

All staff members who are supported by the Certification Council will receive an annual newsletter from the Certification Council with updated information regarding the LCC and Mentoring Program. Current information and necessary forms will be located on the district website as well. Certification Council members will serve as resource people in individual schools and hold site-based meetings as needed for staff members holding professional and conditional certificates.

Section I - Evaluation

The Certification Council will complete annual program evaluations to assure quality, effectiveness, and efficient management. Evaluation will be organized and directed by the Certification Council chairperson.

If necessary, the Certification Council may meet during the summer to make changes that will be implemented for the next school year. Additional summer hours must be preapproved by the superintendent.

Appendix A - Roles and Responsibilities of Certification Council Members

Responsibilities of the *chairperson and co-chairperson* are as follows:

1. Coordinate Certification Council meeting dates and times, set meeting agendas, facilitate meetings and notify members of meetings and other necessary information.
2. Communicate with the State of Maine Department of Education and other necessary parties as the official spokesperson for the District in regard to certification issues.
3. Approve and file Professional Renewal Plans (PRP) and evidence of documented hours.
4. Maintain and update individual records by tracking the progress of all professionally certified educators toward their certification renewal.
5. Notify candidates for recertification of the council's recommendation for renewal and PRP approval in the event the PRP is not approved.
6. Ensure staff access to the Certification Council's procedures and associated documents/forms through an updated website and annual newsletter.
7. Delegate and oversee responsibilities of Certification Council members and Mentors.
8. Provide an orientation for new certification members at the first meeting of the school year
9. Respond to (approve/disapprove) all staff requests for portfolio work leading toward recertification credit.
10. Collaborate with the Human Resources Director to track all newly hired professionals and resignations.
11. Facilitate an annual self-evaluation of the council and discuss results.
12. Ensure confidentiality of files.
13. Review certification files as requested by individual staff members.
14. Remind individuals in the fall of soon-to-be expiring certificates.
15. Oversee elections for building representatives.
16. Sign certification documentation via the Maine DOE MEIS system.
17. Stay current with changes in state law/regulations.
18. Maintain and update list of approved district mentors.
19. Coordinate with building administrators to identify and track pairings of mentors with newly hired professionals.
20. Update and organize necessary documents needed for mentor process including the mentor

handbook.

21. Host mentor training for new mentors and refresher training for current mentors in the fall.
22. Collect and submit mentor documents including mentor logs and timesheets.

Responsibilities of the *council members* are as follows:

1. Assist all staff supported by this plan in the recertification process.
2. Serve as a liaison to respective staff in all matters of professional growth related to certification.
3. Participate in Certification Council meetings
4. Communicate with respective building staff with important deadlines and information.
5. Respond to staff requests for information and/or clarification regarding certification issues.
6. Maintain the confidentiality of the staff.

Appendix B - Mentor Program Overview

Every new teacher or educational specialist hired to MSAD 75, regardless of experience or type of certification must be assigned a district mentor. Mentors are responsible for completing a minimum of two non-evaluative observations annually and provide ongoing support and feedback to their mentees. Please see the [mentor/mentee handbook](#) for more information about roles and responsibilities.

School principals/administrators will match new hires with a qualified mentor using the [mentor pool list](#) at the beginning of every school year (or soon after the effective contract date for mid-year hires) and communicate these pairings with the certification council chair.

Qualified mentors must have:

- a) Three years teaching experience
- b) A professional license
- c) An effectiveness rating of at least *effective* as defined by the Marzano Art and Science of Teaching Framework
- d) Completed a mentor training program

Responsibilities of mentors are as follows:

- 1. Be a resource for the mentee either directly or indirectly.
- 2. Conduct pre and post-observation conferences.
- 3. Observe all aspects of performance (including at least two documented observations).
- 4. Meet on regular basis with the mentee to collaborate and determine the progress of the new educator.
- 5. Complete a log of activity and meetings with their mentee

New hires with a conditional certificate or a professional certificate with less than two years teaching experience will have a mentor for two years. New hires with a professional certificate and two or more years of teaching experience will have a mentor for one year.

Additionally, special educators who are conditionally certified must have a mentor who is also a special educator. It is recommended that all new special educators have a special educator as their mentor, however, if the district does not have enough special educator mentors to match up with the number of special educator mentees, those that are conditionally certified and/or less experienced will be prioritized. If the district doesn't have enough special ed mentors for conditionally certified special educators, the state mentoring program (SEEDS) will help assign an out of district special educator mentor in addition to the regular educator mentor provided by the district*. Teachers with a special education endorsement are qualified to be a special ed mentor regardless of their current teaching role, however SLPs do not technically qualify.

State Induction/Mentoring site: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/educators/educatoreval/inductionmentoring>

*Exceptions to this rule: If the conditionally certified teacher is in their second year of teaching on their conditional certificate or enrolled in the USM grad program, it is not mandatory, although it is still recommended.

Appendix C - Conditional vs. Professional Certificate

Conditional vs. Professional Certification

Conditional Certificate Holders must apply for certifications directly through [the state](#) and then:

- 1) Send a copy of the “Needs Assessment” letter from the state of Maine to the [certification chair](#).
- 2) Fulfill any [state requirements](#) (Praxis etc.).
- 3) Submit all documentation directly to [the state](#).
- 4) Participate in district [mentor program](#) for two years (assigned by building principal)

Professional Certificate Holders must [renew certifications](#) through the certification council using the following procedure:

- 1) Complete a [professional renewal plan](#) (PRP) prior to engaging in professional development that will be used as evidence.
- 2) Complete and [submit](#) 90 documented hours to the council prior to expiration.
- 3) Professional certificate holders who are *new to the district* will participate in the district [mentor program](#) (mentor assigned by building principal).
 - If the certificate holder has two or more years of prior experience, they will participate in the mentor program for one year
 - If the certificate holder has less than two years of prior experience, they will participate in the mentor program for two years
- 4) Renew your certificate!
 - Assuming the above requirements have been met, the certification council chair will recommend for renewal during the six months prior to certificate expiration. Please follow these [instructions](#) to complete the renewal process through the [state portal](#).
 - If applicable, combining multiple endorsements into the same 5-year cycle is recommended.

Appendix D - Professional Certification Renewal

Professional certificates are issued by the Maine Department of Education to teachers, educational specialists, and administrators and must be renewed every five years. In order to renew, applicants must:

- (1) Create a **professional renewal plan** with goals for the five year cycle, and
- (2) Provide **evidence of professional growth** toward the specified goals

(1) Professional Renewal Plan (PRP)

Upon receipt of a new professional certificate, applicants should submit a professional renewal plan to the Certification Council for prior approval. This plan is due six months following the new certificate's effective date. Applicants may use the pre-approved goals via this [PRP Google Form](#) to easily create a PRP. At least two goals should be chosen per five year cycle to give more options along the pathway of professional learning; all professional development activities used as evidence must align with the stated PRP goals. The PRP should be completed prior to engaging in professional development that will be used as evidence. Please contact a certification building representative or the council chair with further questions.

(2) Evidence of Professional Growth - Forms of Documentation

To renew a professional certificate, the [Maine DOE](#) requires an applicant to “complete six (6) semester hours of approved study or 90 hours of in-service training designed to improve the performance of the teacher in the field during the term of the certificate”.

To provide evidence of the necessary 6 semester hours or 90 hours of study, MSAD 75 certificate renewal applicants may submit any combination of the following documentation types:

- a) *Coursework - copy of **official** transcripts*
- b) *Certificates of completion from professional development workshops, conferences, seminars and/or webinars*
- c) *Portfolio*

Transcripts, certificates, and portfolios should be submitted to the Certification Council six months prior to a certificate's expiration date to ensure timely processing of the online certification renewal. The certification chair can not approve renewal applications until all documentation has been submitted. Please use the [Evidence of Completion Google Form](#) to upload evidence.

Coursework:

*Copies of **official** transcripts* of graduate level courses must be [uploaded](#) once course work is completed. A three credit graduate level course counts for three semester hours or the equivalent of 45 hours.

Certificates of Completion:

Any professional learning which includes a signed certificate with documentation of hours may be [submitted](#). Certificates must have the applicant's name, the signature of the program's facilitator, a date of completion, and the number of hours (or CEUs) earned. Certificates may be awarded for workshops or conferences in education sponsored by the district or other outside education agencies. If a certificate is not issued for a particular event, the associated hours may be used as part of a portfolio (see below).

Portfolio:

A portfolio is an organized means of recording continual professional growth that does not fall under the previous two categories of documentation. All documents secured in the portfolio should provide evidence that professional growth has occurred and the performance of the teacher has been improved. Please see the [portfolio requirements document](#) for more information.

Appendix E - Portfolio Requirements

Portfolio Requirements - MSAD 75

A portfolio is an organized means of recording continual professional growth that is not documented through coursework or certificates of completion. All documents secured in the portfolio should provide evidence that professional growth has occurred and the performance of the teacher has been improved. You may use a portfolio for part or all of the 90 required hours for certification renewal. At minimum, staff should meet with their supervising principal, assistant principal, or special ed coordinator to review the [portfolio proposal](#) for pre-approval to count for hours, and again after work is completed in accordance with documentation requirements below. It is strongly suggested that staff also meet with a building-based certification council representative for consultation to assure compliance with certification expectations.

An approved portfolio will include the following:

- ***Cover Letter***
State the purpose of the portfolio as it relates to your professional growth goals.
- ***Approved Plan***
Include your Professional Renewal Plan (PRP) goals and strategies used for professional growth.
- ***Documentation of Hours***
For each goal being addressed, a separate log sheet must be submitted showing dates, time spent, and a description of the activity ([log template](#)). This log sheet must be signed by the applicant and a principal, assistant principal or special ed coordinator.. Conference or workshop certificates signed and dated by organization/presenter may be included in the portfolio as well.
- ***Artifacts***
Provide evidence of completion of each goal. Artifacts could include any of the following that apply: student work, sample lessons/units, educational certificates, committee work, educational affiliations, special projects, publications, honors/awards.
- ***Reflection***
Include a summary of how the artifacts/learning have impacted your professional growth for each of the approved goals related to your portfolio work.

Below are some sample activities that may be incorporated into a certification renewal portfolio:

- School-related professional committee work
- Student teaching supervision
- Education webinars
- Education book groups
- Reading professional literature for lesson implementation
- Prep and presentation time for staff development presentations
- Research about educational programs
- Serving on school visitation accreditation team

- Observation of other teachers or programs in your endorsement areas at other schools
- Planning and executing a community event for students and families
- Publishing of articles, books and activities of an educational nature
- Experiences outside teaching which provided professional growth
- Education volunteer work
- Adult education courses
- Exhibitions: e.g. art show, etc.
- Conferences: e.g. planning, speaking, presenting