

# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



JOHN L. WINN  
Commissioner of Education



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January 24, 2005

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** School District Certification Contacts

**FROM:** Beverly Gregory

**SUBJECT:** **Recent Rule Changes, New Initiatives, and Updates in Educator Certification**

This memorandum is sent to share with you information relating to a new certification endorsement area in American Sign Language and a rule amendment defining qualified personnel that were approved in January 2005 by the State Board of Education. Additional recent information relating to the certification process is included. To ensure that all staff in your office receive pertinent information for their duties and responsibility areas, please advise any new employee or any other staff member to register on-line at [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org) for receipt of official Department communications via the "Paperless Communication" system. Documents that have been previously distributed are available in the archive section of the paperless system.

I look forward to seeing many of you in March at the spring Florida Association of School Personnel Administrators (FASPA) meeting. As usual, we will have a full partnership session planned to provide more extensive certification information and to answer questions. Please contact me by email at [beverly.gregory@fldoe.org](mailto:beverly.gregory@fldoe.org) or by telephone at 850/245-0431, if you need further clarification.

BEVERLY GREGORY  
CHIEF, BUREAU OF EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION

**New Secure On-line Applicant/Certificate Holder Address Change Function Now Available**

To facilitate the implementation of Section 1012.561, Florida Statutes, created in Senate Bill 2986 in the spring 2004 legislative session, we are pleased that the certification home page has been updated with a new secure on-line function that allows applicants and certificate holders to update their mailing addresses and telephone numbers. As you were advised in June 2004, this new law establishes that beginning January 1, 2005, it is the responsibility of each educator to maintain a current mailing address with the Department. The statute also states that an employee of a school district shall notify the employer within 10 days of an address change and the employer in turn shall notify the Department within 30 days. As has already been available, the district may update the Department's mailing address for the educator directly via the district web-based system by using the profile screen to enter an address change. However, this new web page on-line feature will provide another means for updating an address especially useful for educators not employed in a Florida school district.

**New Certification Endorsement - American Sign Language  
Rule 6A-4.02431, FAC**

An endorsement in American Sign Language (ASL) was proposed for approval to the State Board of Education to implement the requirements of Section 1007.2615, Florida Statutes. The statute required the State Board of Education to adopt rules by January 2005 to establish certification requirements for teachers of American Sign Language. The proposed certification standards for an endorsement in American Sign Language were created in collaboration with and approved by the members of the ASL task force appointed by the Commissioner. The text of the rule is attached. The rule provides for specified courses or a valid national professional level certificate issued by the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) as options for certification in the American Sign Language endorsement. The new certification code for the academic endorsement in American Sign Language is 1079/E.

It is important to note that American Sign Language courses are to be designated foreign language credit courses in Florida. Outside the state, the ASL credits may or may not be recognized as foreign language credit. The ASL courses will be relocated to the foreign language curriculum section of the Course Code Directory beginning in school year 2005-2006. Currently, the law requires that Florida teachers of American Sign Language obtain certification by January 1, 2008. The task force has recommended that the Department seek an amendment to the statute to change that date to July 1, 2009. The date change would allow a more reasonable time frame for expansion of course offerings or the creation of district add-on inservice endorsement programs and would align the certification requirement to the school fiscal year rather than to impose a certification change for teachers in mid-year.

**Amendment to the Definition of Qualified Instructional Personnel  
Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC**

The definition for qualified instructional personnel in Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC, has been amended to align to the definition and requirements for highly qualified personnel for experienced teachers of core

academic subjects in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The core academic subjects are: English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, arts, history, and geography. The rule amendment adds the option of meeting the Florida definition of a qualified infield teacher in Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC, by documenting the 100 points of a High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) plan for the academic core content subject taught pursuant to the NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements.

If the district determines an experienced teacher is teaching a core academic subject class and the teacher is eligible and meets the criteria of a HOUSSE plan for the class taught, the teacher would be designated and reported as qualified and not considered out-of-field. This means the teacher would not have to add an additional subject content certification area to his or her educator certificate. This new option would align the Florida qualified teacher requirements to the highly qualified teacher requirements of NCLB. The memorandum from Chancellor Jim Warford dated September 16, 2004, includes the HOUSSE plan implementation information and forms. It is available on the Department web page under hot topic No Child Left Behind – Teacher Quality 2004. The HOUSSE plan is not an appropriate option for reading and ESOL courses and thus shall not apply to those content certification areas. Of course, the teacher is still encouraged to add certification and may do so via the various certification plans, including passing the appropriate subject area test.

**An example:**

A teacher has a valid educator certificate in Middle Grades Mathematics (grades 5-9). The teacher has been assigned for two years to teach classes in M/J Mathematics 1 and 2 and M/J Physical Science. The teacher has been designated as qualified/infield for the mathematics courses but not qualified/out-of-field for the physical science course. Applying the rule amendment, if the teacher meets the requirements for documentation of the 100 points or more for the HOUSSE option for the middle grades physical science course, the teacher is designated as qualified and infield for the physical science course(s) even though the certificate will not show a certification in an appropriate science area.

<b>Electronic Receipt of Fingerprint Reports and Issue Request Forms</b>
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The long-awaited and much anticipated major technology improvement for the bureau and your offices of eliminating the thousands of paper fingerprint reports and issue request forms is getting closer. There have been many unforeseeable events that we have had to overcome including a new fingerprint contract and vendor. The plan is to be piloted in Orange County with a statewide roll-out projected for early March. Stay tuned for the details from David LaJeunesse soon.

/BG

cc: School District Superintendents

**Rule 6A-4.02431 Specialization Requirements for the American Sign Language Endorsement -- Academic Class.**

- (1) A bachelor's or higher degree with certification in an academic class coverage, and
- (2) Eighteen (18) semester hours in American Sign Language to include three (3) semester hours in each area specified below:
  - (a) First and second language acquisition,
  - (b) Linguistics of American Sign Language,
  - (c) Aspects of the deaf culture and community,
  - (d) Methods of teaching American Sign Language,
  - (e) American Sign Language IV, and
  - (f) American Sign Language literature, or
- (3) A bachelor's or higher degree with certification in an academic class coverage, and a valid Professional Level Certificate issued by the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA).

Specific Authority 1001.02, 1007.2615, 1012.55, 1012.56, FS. Law Implemented 1001.02, 1007.2615, 1012.54, 1012.55, 1012.56, FS.