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Circular Letter: C-7

TO: Superintendents of Schools
Executive Directors, Regional Educational Service Centers
Directors, Magnet and Charter Schools

FROM: Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner of Education

DATE: February 10, 2009

SUBJECT: Update on New Certification Web-based System and Process for Renewing Professional Certificates

On September 24, 2008, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) issued a circular letter about the new web-based Connecticut Educator Certification System (CECS). This letter is being sent to update districts on the development of the CECS and provide more detailed information regarding the application submissions by educators, particularly the approximately 17,000 professional educator certificates that expire as of June 30, 2009. The new CECS will provide Connecticut educators a quick, easy and secure method to apply and renew their initial, provisional and professional certificates. Unfortunately, the initial phase of the CECS will NOT allow districts to file district-based application forms (i.e. Substitute Authorizations, DSAPs, Temporary Emergency Coaching Permits, Temporary Authorizations for Minor Assignments, etc.) online. These identified forms will continue to be paper-based applications and will need to be mailed to the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification.

Due to the complexity of the project, staffing issues and work with outside vendors, the “go live” date for the new CECS has been moved to early March 2009. Therefore, educators holding professional educator certificates which will expire on June 30, 2009, currently have two renewal options:

- Wait until March 2009 and apply on-line prior to the expiration date of their professional educator certificate; or
- Complete a paper-based application form (ED179) and have the employing school district(s) fill-out, sign the employment section on page two of the form, and mail the completed form to the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification prior to the expiration date of the professional educator certificate. The paper-based application form is available on-line at: www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cert (click on Application Forms and Fees, scroll down and print ED179).

We encourage educators to wait and use the new system when applying to renew their professional certificate, but we will accept paper ED179 applications.

As part of the new CECS, CSDE will assign a unique ten-digit Educator Identification Number (EIN) to every Connecticut educator. The CSDE will also mail letters to all educators holding professional educator certificates with expiration dates between March 1, 2009, and September 30, 2009, informing them of their EIN and the process to renew their professional educator certificates. All other educators wishing to apply, renew, or upgrade their certificate or request an additional endorsement area, may use the CECS and they will be provided with their EIN upon successful logon to the CECS. Please note, in order to use the new CECS, educators must have a valid e-mail address and access to a computer connected to the Internet using Windows Internet Explorer (version 7.0 or higher) and free Acrobat Reader software installed in order to view pdf. documents.

Paper applications must be filed by the following educators:

- has not completed the required nine Continuing Education Units (CEUs); **and**
- has not worked under the current professional certificate for the full five-year period of the certificate (e.g., retirees, maternity or medical leave applicants, etc.).

This paper application must be signed by the superintendent or human resource director and provide the dates that the educator has worked.

Once the renewal process is complete, the CSDE will mail the certificate to the individual educator's home address. Therefore, districts must request a copy of the new certificate from their employees. Also, the CSDE will audit a percentage of renewal applications that are submitted to ensure that the required number of hours for CEUs has been completed. The CSDE recently contracted with Protraxx, a vendor who produces a CEU tracking software. CSDE will complete electronic audits of selected educators who work in approximately 90 districts that participate with Protraxx; these selected educators will not receive a request to mail copies of CEU certificates.

We have also included as an attachment to this letter, an electronic file of district employees whose certificates will be expiring between January 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010.

If you have any questions concerning this circular letter, please do not hesitate to contact Nancy Pugliese, Bureau Chief of Educator Standards and Certification, at (860) 713-6709 or via e-mail at nancy.pugliese@ct.gov.

MKM:nph

cc: Human Resource Personnel
Dr. Marion H. Martinez, Associate Commissioner

Attachment