

**Issuance of the Standard Certificate and Renewal Requirements,
Including Continuing Professional Education
(19 TAC Chapter 232, Subchapters M and R)**

THE BOARD IS SCHEDULED TO ADOPT THESE RULES AT ITS AUGUST 1999 MEETING AND
THE RULES WILL TAKE EFFECT ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1999.

RULES GOVERNING RENEWAL WERE INITIALLY ADOPTED BY THE BOARD IN 1998 –
SEVERAL CHANGES HAVE SINCE BEEN MADE TO THE RULES AND
ARE INCORPORATED INTO THE RESPONSES PROVIDED BELOW.

1. *What is a Standard Certificate?*

It is the new certificate that will be issued by SBEC and must be renewed every five years to remain valid. The Standard Certificate replaces the lifetime Provisional and Professional Certificates.

2. *When will SBEC begin issuing the Standard Certificate?*

September 1, 1999. Individuals who complete preparation and/or ExCET requirements after that date will be issued the Standard Certificate. Applications from individuals who complete these requirements prior to September 1st must be received by SBEC no later than October 29, 1999, to be eligible for the lifetime certificate.

3. *When will an educator have to renew the Standard Certificate(s)?*

The renewal cycle will be every five years at the end of the educator's birth month. For example, an educator born in March who is issued a certificate in December 1999 would be subject to renewal requirements in March 2005.

4. *Do current educators have to renew their lifetime certificates?*

No. Educators holding lifetime certificates have been exempted from the renewal process. It is important to note, however, that current educators adding certificates after September 1, 1999, will be issued the Standard Certificate, which must be renewed. As a result, it is likely that many current educators will hold both lifetime and Standard Certificates.

5. *Can currently certified educators receive a Standard Certificate for areas in which they hold a lifetime certificate?*

Yes. Educators who voluntarily choose to enter the renewal system will receive at no cost the Standard Certificate, which is being totally redesigned. Procedures for notifying SBEC of the decision to opt in to the renewal system will be posted in August to the SBEC Website (www.sbec.state.tx.us).

6. *What is required for renewal every five years?*

All certified educators, including educational aides, seeking to renew a certificate(s) must:

- hold a valid Standard Certificate that has not been, nor is in the process of being, sanctioned by SBEC;
- successfully complete a criminal history review;
- not be in default on a student loan or in arrears of child support;
- complete a total of 150 clock hours of continuing professional education (CPE); and
- pay a renewal fee, likely to be \$30-\$40.

Superintendents, principals, and assistant principals, must complete 200 CPE hours. Principals and assistant principals are also required to complete an assessment process designed to assist in the development of a professional growth plan.

7. ***Will educators have to take the ExCET or some other test to renew the Standard Certificate?***
No.

8. ***Why does an educator's status with student loan and child support payments impact the renewal decision?***

The Texas Education Code (Sec. 57.491) and the Family Code (Chapter 232) explicitly require all licensing agencies to deny renewal to any licensee – in this case, a certified educator – who is not complying with student loan or child support obligations.

9. ***What happens if an educator who holds a lifetime certificate decides to enter the renewal system and fails to satisfy the CPE requirements?***

The educator would simply revert back to his/her valid lifetime certificate(s) and the Standard Certificate(s) would move to inactive status.

10. ***Can an educator renew his/her certificate(s) even if he/she is not employed by a school district?***

Yes. Any educator can apply to renew a valid Standard Certificate, irrespective of his/her employment status.

11. ***How much will it cost to renew a certificate?***

A fee has not yet been established by the Board. SBEC is designing a new Web-based technology system that is expected to decrease the costs associated with managing the information necessary to administer the Board's statutory responsibilities, including functions related to certificate issuance and renewal. At this time, it is not possible to determine the impact of this new technology. It is also not possible to estimate the cost of operating the agency in 2004, which is the first year renewal fees will be collected. The Board plans to establish all fees related to the renewal process no later than 2002.

12. ***What activities count toward the required 150 CPE clock hours every five years?***

To allow maximum flexibility for educators to identify appropriate CPE activities to meet their individual needs, CPE clock hours can be accrued through the following:

- workshops, conferences, and in-service or staff development given by an approved provider or sponsor;
- undergraduate and post-graduate coursework through an accredited institution of higher education, with one semester credit hour being equivalent to 15 CPE clock hours;
- interactive distance learning, video conferencing, or on-line activities;
- independent study, not to exceed 30 hours;
- developing curriculum or CPE training materials;
- presenting CPE activities, not to exceed 15 hours;
- serving as a mentor, not to exceed 45 clock hours; and
- serving as an assessor for the principal assessment, not to exceed 15 hours.

13. ***Are there specific requirements regarding the number of CPE hours that must be accrued each year and the content of the CPE activities?***

No. The only absolute requirement is the completion of 150 hours of CPE each five-year renewal period. The Board changed from "must" to "should" the number of clock hours of continuing education to be completed each year and removed limitations on the number of hours that could be accrued annually through various types of activities. For example, teachers are not required to accumulate a minimum of 20 clock hours each year, but they are encouraged to do so to stay current in the profession. Similarly, even though an educator can accrue all 150 CPE

hours in English while concurrently renewing a History certificate, it is suggested that at least five CPE hours each year be devoted to the content area for each certificate being renewed.

14. *What if an educator is renewing multiple certificates?*

An educator must complete a total of 150 CPE hours (or 200 hours for superintendents, principals and assistant principals) for all certificates. As previously mentioned, it is suggested that for each certificate being renewed at least five hours of CPE be completed each year. The renewal fee will be the same, regardless of the number of certificates being renewed.

15. *How will SBEC verify that an educator has satisfied renewal requirements?*

Each educator will affirm on an affidavit submitted to the Board that all requirements for renewal have been met (see Question #6). Information regarding criminal history and compliance with student loan and child support obligations will be obtained by SBEC from other state agencies. If information is falsely presented on the affidavit, the educator could be subject to criminal charges and sanction of his/her certificate(s).

16. *What happens if an educator does not renew the Standard Certificate?*

Any Standard Certificate that is not renewed will move to inactive status. If the educator wants to reactivate the certificate, the educator must notify the Board and pay a reactivation fee. For reasons mentioned in Question #11, the amount of that fee has not yet been established.

17. *Is there a grace period for completing renewal requirements?*

The SBEC executive director will establish procedures to consider hardship exemptions to the CPE requirements for documented health-related reasons and other extenuating circumstances. An individual who at the end of the renewal period lacks only a portion of the CPE hours to satisfy renewal requirements must complete the hours within six months after the renewal date to avoid having his/her certificate(s) moved to inactive status. A late fee will be established by the Board.

18. *Who can provide CPE hours?*

Pre-approved CPE providers are:

- Texas public school districts, provided that staff development activities are developed, approved, and conducted in accordance with the site-based decision-making process;
- regional education service centers;
- accredited institutions of higher education;
- education associations that have offered professional development in Texas for at least five years and have tax-exempt status under federal law or state associations that are affiliated with a national association with tax-exempt status;
- private schools recognized by TEA;
- TEA; and
- SBEC.

All other entities or individuals wishing to provide CPE hours must apply to be approved by the SBEC executive director. If an entity or individual provides CPE activities on behalf of a pre-approved provider, the provider is responsible for ensuring compliance with quality and documentation requirements. All pre-approved providers will receive information in July regarding registration with SBEC as an approved provider.

19. *Will CPE providers have to maintain documentation and provide to SBEC information about educator attendance at CPE activities?*

No. Recognizing the burden such reporting requirements would place on providers, the Board has eliminated this requirement.

20. *What documentation is a provider required to maintain?*

The provider must be able to document compliance with Board rules, that each CPE activity supports the standards for the certificate(s) addressed by the activity, and that each activity is taught by individuals who are competent in the subject matter being delivered.

21. *What documentation will the educator receive to verify attendance at CPE activities?*

At the conclusion of each activity, the provider must give to each educator a written document that lists, at a minimum, the educator's name, the date and content of the activity, and the number of clock hours that count toward satisfying CPE requirements.

22. *How will renewal requirements address the quality of current professional development offerings?*

The Board will require all providers to affirm that their offerings are taught by appropriately knowledgeable individuals and contribute to the advancement of professional knowledge and skills. Every two years, providers must conduct a comprehensive self-study to gauge the quality of their CPE offerings, the results of which should be used to improve activities available to educators. SBEC rules also provide a mechanism for educators to register complaints with the Board, which can lead to an investigation of, and possible sanctions against, the CPE provider. For example, if a school district does not utilize the site-based decision-making process in identifying in-service activities, as required by the Texas Education Code (Sec. 21.451), the SBEC may revoke that district's status as a CPE provider.

23. *What kinds of CPE pilot programs are authorized?*

The SBEC executive director can approve school districts as pilot sites for developing alternative approaches to document that an educator has satisfied the CPE required for renewal. The Board wants to encourage efforts similar to those of the Texas Staff Development Council and other professional education associations, which are currently working together to develop methods and activities that can be used to document teacher and student growth. These activities, in turn, could provide acceptable documentation that an educator has met CPE requirements for purposes of certificate renewal.