

RSU 54 / MSAD 54

Certification Handbook

Developed 2022

RSU 54 / MSAD 54 Board

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RSU 54 / MSAD 54 Teachers' Association

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I. SCOPE DEFINITIONS, GOVERNANCE PLAN, CERTIFICATION STEERING COMMITTEE AND AMENDMENTS

A. Scope

The Professional Learning Community Support System of RSU 54/MSAD 54 includes the towns of Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock, Skowhegan, and Smithfield, and is composed of elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. This Certification Steering Committee is designed to provide support for educators, specialists, nurses, consultants and other education positions that may fall under CSC recommendation for certification through MDOE. This can vary pending MDOE guidelines.

B. Management

The structure for RSU 54/MSAD 54 certification will be overseen by the Certification Steering Committee (CSC).

The CSC will provide the Commissioner of Education with the recommendations for educational personnel seeking professional certification, professional renewal, or additional certification. The CSC will work under the guidance of local administration and state guidelines. All decisions-will be made in a professional, fair and equitable manner. CSC Members are liaisons between personnel at the building level and the recertification team. Plans are in place to facilitate the use of mentors for all initial professional teachers. Documentation is provided regularly to employees to inform them of their recertification status.

In the event that staff members do not follow procedures for recertification, the issue will be brought to the CSC for consideration. The Superintendent’s Office will be informed. A timeline will be established and new goals will be set. The CSC will follow up with that individual until the situation is resolved. If the situation is unresolved after the established time period, the employee will be advised how they may present their case to the Commissioner of Education.

All materials gathered during the certification process are confidential and are kept separate from an individual’s personnel folder. No materials, either written or verbal, may be divulged to any outside source. It is the responsibility of each CSC member to respect the individual’s rights of confidentiality.

C. Definitions

Credits: 6 college/university credits or 9 CEU’s or 90 contact hours or equivalent combination needed for recertification.

CSC: Elected Certification Steering Committee that governs the most current Certification Laws

Educational Specialist: Guidance Counselor, Library/Media Specialist, Literacy Specialist, Vocational Ed. Evaluator, School Nurse, Athletic Director; this can vary depending DOE lists.

Endorsement: Licensed subject area.

IPCAP: Initial Professional Certification Action Plan: the document used by initial professional certificate, conditional certificate, and targeted need certificate, for listing improvement goals for gaining initial certificates or endorsements.

MDOE: Maine Department of Education.

MDOE Portal: DOE website to access certification credentials and renew certificates.

Mentor: The person selected by the CSC to support the teacher holding an initial professional, conditional, or targeted need certificate and to act as an advocate and be a resource.

Mentee: Teacher who is mentored to support their initial professional, conditional or targeted need certificate.

TRP: Teacher Renewal Plan: the document used by professional teachers, for listing improvement goals and the methods for achieving these goals to gain recertification.

D. Functioning of Certification Steering Committee (CSC)

The CSC is responsible for the governance and the implementation of Recertification laws and guidelines implemented by MDOE. The CSC will:

1. Approve plans for initial professional, conditional, targeted need, and professional teachers.
2. Assign a mentor teacher to each initial professional, conditional, or targeted need certificate. The names of the mentors will be recommended to the Superintendent for appointment and approval by the School Board.
3. The Certification Steering Committee (CSC) will not meet more than 20 times per year for not more than 2 hours per meeting. Meetings will be scheduled for twice a month and minutes of these meetings will be recorded.
4. New teacher network - Individual CSC members will be assigned as contact persons between the committee, mentor and mentee.
5. The CSC will provide mentors with state approved training and maintain a list of trained mentors.
6. Meet with initial professional, conditional, or targeted need teachers and their mentors to discuss roles, responsibilities, timelines and important related sections in the handbook.

The CSC membership will consist of the following people who must have at least three (3) years of experience in the district:

1. Three elementary teachers – not more than one per building
2. One middle school teacher
3. Two high school teachers
4. Assistant Superintendent of Schools

The members will serve for three-year terms with alternating elections. Elections for each cycle will rotate every three years.

Cycle One

- One elementary representative
- Middle school representative
- One high school representative

Cycle Two

- Two elementary representatives
- One high school representative

The CSC will solicit written nominations from the above subgroups up for election and create a ballot to be voted upon by each of those subgroups. If a tie vote occurs, there will be a run-off vote. Newly elected CSC members will have their names given to the Superintendent of Schools for appointment and approval by the School Board at the June board meeting. Each member will receive a contract by September 15th and will forfeit his/her appointment to the second-elect if he/she fails to return the signed contract to the Office of the Superintendent within two weeks.

In the case of a resignation at the end of the first or second year during a three-year term, the CSC will solicit written nominations and create a ballot to be voted on for the remainder of the term. The newly elected member will have his/her name given to the Superintendent of schools for appointment and approval by the School Board.

In the case of a resignation during the school year, the CSC will recommend the second-elect to the Superintendent for appointment and approval by the School Board.

E. CSC Chairperson/Co-Chairperson Duties

The Chairperson/Co-Chairperson for the CSC will be selected by the committee members and have the responsibility to lead the committee in the administration and supervision of the recertification process.

The Chair/Co-Chair will:

1. Convene and chair CSC meetings
2. Prepare agenda and see that minutes are kept for each meeting
3. Communicate CSC recommendations to the MDOE (Commissioner)
4. Delegate responsibilities to committee members
5. See that provisions are made and orientations are given to mentors and new staff at the appropriate times; mentor training is provided; and meet with new teachers during their district orientation, to familiarize them with the this handbook and procedures, usually the week before school starts

6. See that appropriate records are kept and maintained in a safe place on all candidates
7. Act as liaison to the Board of Directors and administrative team;
8. Give tentative approval to amendments in renewal plans which must be made between CSC meetings
9. Facilitate partnerships between mentors and mentees
10. Carry on committee work such as approving renewal plans and signing certification forms in the summer
11. Provide orientation and training of CSC members
12. With the assistance of the Asst. Superintendent's secretary maintains cumulative confidential and secure certification files

F. Handbook Amendment Procedures

Any proposed change in the Certification Handbook will be submitted to the CSC for review. If there is change to the certification law, the CSC will draft the necessary language.

The CSC will publish and circulate the proposed change(s) to:

1. The Executive Committee of the Educational Association for review and comment
2. The Program and Policy Committee for review and comment
3. The general teacher population for review and comment
4. Once reviewed by all parties, changes will be submitted to the MDOE, if required
5. The handbook, renewal plan and action plan are available online at <http://www.msad54.org/district/certification/index.shtml>
6. An amendment will have no impact on anyone working under an active IPCAP or TRP.

II: RECERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

A. Teacher Renewal Plan (TRP)

A candidate for renewal of a teaching certificate must prepare and submit for approval, to the CSC a renewal plan which:

1. lists professional development goal(s);
2. describes how the candidate will acquire six credits of approved study which lead to the accomplishment of the goal(s) and relate to the endorsement for which the candidate is seeking renewal.

B. Procedure:

1. Renewal plans should be submitted to the CSC immediately after receiving renewed certification.
2. Modified plans may be submitted at any time but must be submitted prior to implementation. If necessary, emergency modifications can be made by the chairperson.

[Renewal plans are available on the Certification Website.](#)

3. The original renewal plan goals should reflect professional development growth
4. Each teacher is expected to maintain a file of all required documents as proof of completion of approved activities.
5. Activities requiring additional documentation for approval (e.g., individual projects, travel, work experience, etc.) should be attached to the renewal plan when submitted, if possible.
6. When activities are completed each teacher will submit his/her documentation to the CSC. The CSC will meet with the teacher if his/her documentation is incomplete, ambiguous and/or if there is a possibility that the request for renewal will be denied. The CSC will recommend that the certificate be renewed or **not** renewed.
7. It is the sole responsibility of each teacher to provide the CSC with a renewal plan; to seek approval of all modifications to the renewal plan; to submit documentation for approval of such activities as travel, work, individual/ group projects; and to maintain all required documentation for each activity.
8. Teachers who have transferred from other schools must hand in copies of all materials for recertification from their previous school to the CSC. These activities will be accepted by the CSC within three months of being hired. A MSAD 54 renewal plan should be completed.

C. Methods of Earning Credit

Credits: 6 college/university credits or 9 CEUs or 90 contact hours/credit hours or equivalent combination are required for certification renewal every five years.

1 college/university credit=1.5 CEUs=15 contact hours

The following is a description of ways in which a teacher can earn six credits toward renewal of his/her teaching certificate. All methods for renewal **must** be approved in advance by the support system, be listed as part of the renewal plan, and consistent with the stated goals.

1. College/University Courses/District Inservice Coursework:

- copy of grade transcript or certificate of completion must be submitted and the course must be passed with a C grade or better for graduate courses, or a passing grade for undergraduate/ recertification courses. There is no limit in category 1.

2. Workshops/Conferences/Webinars/Webcast and similar Virtual Meetings:

- participants wishing to earn credits for renewal must submit a titled certificate which describes:
 - a. time involved (active participation only);
 - b. content covered;
- presenters wishing to earn credits for renewal must submit documentation which describes:
 - a. time involved (prep & presenting)
 - b. content summary
- up to 3 credits (documented)/4.5 CEU's (documented)/45 contact hours (documented) towards renewal in Category 2.
- National Board Certification falls under this category.

3. Individual or Group Study/Research/Curriculum Project:

- **additional detailed plan must be submitted in advance which describes:**
 - a. educational need or problem;
 - b. observable/measurable objectives to be accomplished;
 - c. plan of action listing specific steps/activities to be carried out;
 - d. evaluation criteria for project **and who will evaluate completion of the project;**
- upon completion, a report must be submitted which includes information about the teacher's personal development and the project's impact on students and learning. The evaluator's signature must be on the final report;
- The Certification Steering Committee shall accept, reject, or request modifications to the report before approving it for credit;
- up to 3 credits (documented)/4.5 CEU's (documented)/45 contact hours (documented) towards renewal in category 3.

4. Travel:

- travel must enhance instructional role;
- additional **detailed plan must be submitted in advance which includes:**
 - a. educational objectives of trip;
 - b. itinerary;
 - c. description of types of information which will be collected;
 - d. description of ways information will be utilized in classroom;
 - e. time involved;
 - a written report must be submitted upon return describing the experience relative to the above criteria;
- up to 4.5 CEU's (documented)/45 contact hours (documented) in category 4.

5. Work Experience / Course and Inservice Instruction

- activities must enhance instructional role and relate directly to a participant's teaching area;
- **detailed plan of the activities must be submitted in advance which includes:**
 - a. how the activities will add to/enhance instructional role;
 - b. how the activities experience will impact teaching/learning;
 - c. time involved (prep & presenting);
 - upon ending the activity, a written report must be submitted detailing the learning experiences related to the above criteria;
- up to 4.5 CEU's (documented)/45 contact hours (documented) in category 5

6. Committee Work-District, State or Building:

- upon ending committee work, a written report must be submitted which includes:
 - a. how committee work will impact teaching / learning

- b. time involved;
- signing off from the committee chairperson or leader must be submitted substantiating participation on that committee;
- District committee work will be documented by a certificate issued by the Assistant Superintendent's office.
- up to 4.5 CEU's (documented)/45 contact hours (documented) toward renewal in category 6.

7. A. Participation as a Mentor for a Initial Professional Targeted Needs or Conditional Teacher; Supervisor of a Student Teacher:

- up to 4.5 CEU's /45 contact hours maximum for two years participation as a mentor;
 - up to 4.5 CEU's /45 contact hours for participation as a Cooperating Teacher for 16 weeks (8 weeks=22.5 hours)
- submit documentation verifying your role as a Mentor or Cooperating Teacher

B. Participation as a Supervisor of a Practicum Student:

- up to 1.5 CEU's /15 contact hours for each practicum;
- submit documentation verifying your role as a Supervisor of a Practicum Student(s)
 - up to 4.5 CEU's/45 total contact hours allowed in category 7.

III. INITIAL PROFESSIONAL, CONDITIONAL, OR TARGETED NEED CERTIFICATE ACTION PLAN

A. Mentor's Role

The initial professional, conditional, or targeted need certificate teacher (mentee) will be assigned a mentor. The mentor will use a peer coaching process to provide support and assistance for the improvement of the initial professional or conditional teacher. The mentor must be trained in a MDOE program or State approved equivalent. In special cases the CSC may appoint “recently active practitioners” to allow the use of mentors and committee members who may not be currently teaching.

1. The CSC will choose a mentor to support the initial professional conditional teacher or targeted need certificate.
2. The Mentor and Mentee will be emailed the appointment and the link to the online Mentor and Mentee Handbook.
3. The mentor and the mentee will attend a formal orientation in September or October to discuss responsibilities, roles procedures, available services, training and professional development opportunities, and the process for meeting the

mentor requirement. At this time each Mentor will receive a Mentor Handbook and each Mentee will receive a Mentee Handbook.

4. The mentor will commit to serving two years. Each mentor will receive a contract by October 15th and must have it signed and returned by October 30th.
5. The mentor shall have at least three (3) years of teaching experience in the district and hold a professional certification.
6. The mentor will **support** the mentee as an **advocate** and a **resource**.
7. The mentor, in conjunction with the mentee, will oversee the development of the mentee's IPCAP and adhere to the specified data collections, time lines and procedures. This plan must be submitted to the CSC in December for approval. The plan must identify goals and strategies for improving professional skills consistent with the certificate level or endorsement and be based upon Maine's Initial Teachers Certification Standards.
8. The mentor and the mentee will maintain regular communication and meet a minimum of ten times during each school year for at least ½ hour per meeting. Mentors will coordinate time with the mentee for observations, conferences, etc.
9. Mentors will complete three formal observations during the school year. One by December and an additional two by April Break. Formal observations include a pre-observation and post observation conference.
10. Mentors will provide the certification committee documentation (pre-observation, observation and post-observation notes) and a summary statement of the mentee's progress. These summaries will state if the teacher is progressing toward his/her goals or if there are concerns.
 - one due before December break;
 - one due before April break.

All additional data collected will be turned in by the end of May. (ie: weekly logs, communications notes, etc)

B. Development of the Initial Professional, Conditional, Targeted Need Certificate - Initial Professional Certification Action Plan

The initial professional, conditional or targeted need certificate and his/her mentor will prepare a Professional Certification Action Plan (IPCAP). The IPCAP will be based on:

1. Standards which must be met to acquire the desired certification (see the section on Professional Level Standards, which follows);
2. Additional study and/or in service deemed necessary to receive a positive recommendation for the certification;
3. Skills which need improvement;
4. Means to achieve improvement goals.

The IPCAP will be based on the initial observations and assessments of the provisional or conditional teacher by the mentor relative to the standards for professional level certification, which follow.

Mentees may earn contact hours towards the renewal of their professional certificate during their mentoring cycle. The district awards 45 contact hours at the end of the 2-year mentoring cycle.

IV. PROFESSIONAL LEVEL STANDARDS

The initial professional certificate is based upon demonstration of Maine's Initial Teacher Certification Standards which would include:

- A. Demonstrates knowledge of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) s/he teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students
- B. Demonstrates the ability to integrate the concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures among the disciplines.
- C. Demonstrates knowledge of the diverse ways in which students develop and learn by providing learning opportunities that support students' intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development.
- D. Plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, and curriculum goals.
- E. Understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies and appropriate technologies.
- F. Creates and maintains a classroom environment which supports and encourages learning.
- G. Demonstrates the ability to support students' learning and well-being by engaging students, home, school, colleagues, and community.
- H. Understands and uses a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and support the development of the learner.
- I. Demonstrates an awareness of and commitment to ethical and legal responsibilities of a teacher.
- J. Demonstrates a strong professional ethic and a desire to contribute to the education profession.

V. COMPETENCIES

An initial professional, conditional, or targeted need certificate must demonstrate competency in all areas of the previously mentioned standards. Competency in any one area will be defined as demonstrating a majority of the listed behaviors consistently within the first two (2) years of teaching.

VI. TIMELINES AND PROCEDURES

YEAR ONE The mentor and mentee teacher will meet a minimum of ten times and be observed at least three times.

<p>August -September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mentors & Mentees are assigned ● Mentors meet with Mentees ● Attend required meeting with Certification Committee. (CSC) ● Establish a schedule and way to document future meetings. ● Support new teacher as they acclimate to the new building 	<p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentor contracts sent out/signed ● On-going weekly meetings ● One informal observation ● Review Initial Teaching Standards ● Conference / Observations 	<p>November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Initial Teaching Standards to determine goals on Initial Professional Certification Action Plan (PCAP) ● Complete Formal observation (pre and post conference-30 min)
<p>By December Break (Submit together)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal observation and Initial Professional Teacher Certification Plan (PCAP) for review by the CSC.- Please sign first! (Returned as a working document.) <p>· Mentor submits a summary statement of Mentee’s progress.</p>	<p>January to March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing meetings ● Work on PCAP goals ● Regular meetings, conferences & observations ● Complete 2 formal observations (pre and post conference-30 min) 	<p>Before April Break (submit together)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal observation and notes ● Meeting log and notes ● PCAP noting any changes ● Continued support until the end of the year ● Mentor submits a summary of Mentee’s progress

May: Turn in additional collected data and documentation for Mentee’s file. Copy given to mentee for their records.

YEAR TWO Mentor and-mentee will meet a minimum of ten times.

<p>September-November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentors meet with Mentees ● Attend required meeting with Certification Committee ● Review/modify Initial Professional Certification Action Plan (IPCAP) ● On-going weekly meetings ● One formal observation (pre/post conference) ● Mentor contracts sent out/signed 	<p>By December Break (Submit together)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Submit formal observation and updated IPCAP for review by the CSC if changes made ● Mentor submits a summary statement of Mentee’s progress. 	<p>January-March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing meetings ● Work on IPCAP goals ● Regular meetings, conference and two formal observations (pre/post conference)
<p>Before April Break (submit together)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All formal observation and notes ● Meeting log and notes ● IPCAP ● Final summary statement and recommendation for Professional Teaching Certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a MSAD 54 Teacher Renewal Plan for remaining years on current certificate or new professional and submit to Certification Committee 	<p>May-June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Turn in additional collected data and documentation for file, as needed