

Information on DESE Student Services Certification changes

The Student Services certification areas have recently been changed to conform with changes to Teacher certification that were passed by the Missouri legislature a few years ago. Student Services includes the School Psychological Examiner (SPE) and School Psychologist (SP) certification areas, as well as other certifications (Counselor, Speech Therapist). These changes can be viewed on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website under the Education Certification area at: <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divteachqual/teachcert/studserv.html>

Following is a summary of the important changes:

- Initial certification as a SPE or SP is valid for a 4 year period. During the first two years, the district employing the SPE or SP must provide mentoring (the first year may be an internship for SP certification). In addition, a yearly professional development plan must be completed and the SPE or SP must participate in an annual performance-based evaluation. Finally, within this 4 year period, the SPE or SP must complete at least 40 hours of professional development (continuing education) OR three semester hours of graduate credit toward an advance degree.
- Career Continuous certification – after the initial 4 year period, if all activities have been successfully completed, the applicant may apply for Career Continuous certification. This certification becomes valid for 99 years (much longer than most of us will ever need!). However, to maintain this certification the school district must submit to DESE proof that the applicant has participated in an annual performance-based evaluation and has completed at least 20 hours of continuing professional development annually. This is a CHANGE from prior certification renewal procedures in which certification renewal was on a 5 year cycle, with documentation of continuing education hours provided only at the end of this cycle.
- If your district does NOT submit the yearly required documentation, your certification becomes INACTIVE.
- If you do NOT complete at least 20 hours of continuing professional development each year, your certification becomes INACTIVE.
- If your certification becomes INACTIVE, to reactivate your certificate you must complete 24-contact hours of professional development, which may include college coursework, within the six months prior to or after your certification becomes inactive. Then, you must complete the annual 20-contact hour requirement for that year. During the school year, you must complete $24 + 20 = 44$ -contact hours of professional development.
- For people with multiple certifications, you must only meet certification standards for the area you are currently employed in and your other certification areas will

be carried without requiring you to meet those requirements also (e.g., you don't have to complete 40 hours per year to maintain two certifications).

Based on these changes MASP recommends the following:

1. Be certain that your supervisor is completing a yearly performance based evaluation on you.
2. Complete an annual Professional Development Plan.
3. Talk to your director of personnel to find out how you are supposed to submit your yearly 20 hours of continuing professional development and to find out what types of in-service activities will be accepted. The fall and spring MASP conferences are great opportunities to gain many of your required hours in areas directly related to your field. You may turn in your CEU's for credit.
4. If you are a newly certified SPE or SP, be certain your district has assigned a mentor to you for the first two years.

MASP has implemented the following activities to assist our members in the area of certification:

*We are working with DESE to develop a model Performance Based Evaluation tool for School Psychologists and School Psychological Examiners. We are aware that the Performance Based Evaluation for Teachers that districts typically use does not really fit with our required competencies and job responsibilities. When this evaluation tool is completed, it will be posted on the DESE website for districts to use, if they wish.

*DESE is starting a website for mentoring of new teachers to assist districts in providing a good mentoring experience. DESE has invited MASP to also develop a site for the mentoring of School Psychologists and School Psychological Examiners. Again, this will be a support to districts, especially for smaller districts that do not have access to highly qualified mentors.

*Currently, DESE has not approved the use of the NCSP (Nationally Certified School Psychologist), or any other national professional certification **except** for the National Board Certification for Teachers. However, MASP is lobbying to include the NCSP as a way to exempt School Psychologists who have more than 10 years experience from the yearly continuing professional development requirement (this is listed in part C of the new Certification Requirements for SP and SPE's, but until DESE determines if they will accept the NCSP, it is not possible to obtain this exemption). In addition MASP is also advocating that school psychologists from other states applying for initial certification in Missouri be automatically granted certification if they hold the NCSP certification.