

Certification

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires all elementary teachers to hold a valid, current Florida certificate in their primary teaching area. If a teacher allows his or her professional certification to expire and has not obtained enough master inservice points (120) or college course credits (6) to recertify, the teacher's contract cannot be renewed. A newly hired uncertified teacher must apply for a temporary certificate no later than September 30th of the year in which he/she is hired or within thirty (30) days of hire if the date is after September 30th. If application is not made within the above deadline, the applicant is placed on unpaid administrative leave until the application has been submitted. If an applicant for a temporary certificate is notified by the state that he/she is not eligible for a temporary certificate until certain requirements are met, the applicant must complete the requirements prior to June 30th of the academic year in which he/she has been hired. The administrator of the school should request a copy of the requirements and monitor the teacher's progress. If the requirements are not met within the hire year for the temporary certificate, an agreement for continued employment will not be offered.

Once the temporary certificate is issued the teacher must complete the requirements for the professional certificate indicated on the statement of eligibility within the three year validity period of the temporary certificate. This includes the completion of the Professional Mentoring Program which is a year long program in which the teacher demonstrates the competencies required by the State of Florida. If a teacher has graduated from a Florida University in a program for teachers and is already eligible for a professional certificate, there is an abbreviated Professional Mentoring Program that can be used during the teacher's first year of employment.

The State of Florida does not issue extensions on temporary or professional certificates except for severe and unavoidable reasons, e.g. a debilitating illness.

If a school has a teacher who has not complied with the above requirements, this must be reported on the ARCA as noncompliance with the applicable standard. The Office of Catholic Schools and Centers will recommend to the accreditation committee that the school be placed on "Accredited Advised." If the noncompliance is repeated, the status recommended for the school will be "Accredited Warned." In addition, the teacher will not be offered an agreement for continued employment.

All secondary teachers and Morning Star teachers with the exception of those teaching religion are required to have a valid Florida certificate in their teaching area(s). If the above circumstances occur for a Morning Star teacher or a secondary teacher, the superintendent of schools will not sign the agreement and the offer for employment is rescinded.

Teachers of art, music, technology, and foreign language at the elementary level are not required to have a Florida certificate according to FCC accreditation standards. Local schools may have the requirement for certification in art, music, technology, and foreign language in their local hiring policies. If the above teachers do not hold certification, they must possess verifiable qualifications. The principal is required to present to the superintendent of Catholic schools and centers the individual's qualifications and request a letter of qualification. These teachers are required to participate in 120 hours of professional development or take two college level courses for three credits each every five years. Proof of continued professional development must be kept in the teacher's personnel folder. Teachers who do not meet the above requirements will not be offered an agreement for continued employment.