

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT NO. 18
(Messalonskee School District)

Professional Learning Communities
Support System Plan



Board Approved: January 6, 2010
DOE Approved: March 22, 2011

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A. Organization of District

RSU No. 18/Messalonskee School District includes the towns of Belgrade, China, Oakland, Rome, and Sidney. The schools in this District include one high school, two middle schools, and five elementary schools, two in Oakland and one in Sidney, China and Belgrade.

B. Purpose

The Professional Learning Community Support System (PLCSS) will provide strong and appropriate support services in order to develop effective educational practice for all certified staff supported by this plan. This plan is designed to provide support for all teachers, guidance counselors, library-media specialists, special education consultants, speech and hearing clinicians, athletic directors, nurses and literacy specialists, as well as educational technicians in the District. The PLCSS will provide the Commissioner of Education with recommendations for educational personnel seeking professional certification, professional renewal, certification advancement (*see Chapter 118*), or educational technician authorization (*see Chapter 118*).

The professionals in RSU No. 18 will receive support from their peers in the areas of professional growth planning and implementation, assessment of progress, and recommendation of renewal or recertification of their professional certificate. The process will be teacher-driven, flexible and will operate with emphasis on professional growth.

C. Governance

The Professional Learning Community Support System (PLCSS) will function with a Certification Board made up of teachers and one school administrator.

Certification Board: The Certification Board will be composed of 8 members:

- 1 Messalonskee High School
- 1 Messalonskee Middle School
- 1 China Middle School
- 1 China Primary School
- 1 James H. Bean School
- 1 Belgrade Central School
- 1 Atwood School/Williams Elementary School
- 1 Administrator

Certification Board members must have at least 5 years of teaching experience, have state approved mentor training, and be a member of the District faculty. These Board members will be elected by their respective faculties, and their names will be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools. Members of the Certification Board will hold a three-year term. Previous to the end of the term a member can opt to continue in the position or resign. When multiple staff members from the same building are interested in a vacancy, the staff of the school will vote for the individual who they wish to represent their building.

Meetings: Monthly meetings will be scheduled through the school year. Additional meetings may be called by the chairperson as needed. Release time will be provided as necessary to process action plans or conduct other necessary business. A quorum will consist of five members.

Chairperson: Duties of the Chairperson will be to:

1. conduct meetings
2. call special meetings
3. notify mentors of responsibilities and timelines
4. develop agendas
5. communicate to all staff on matters regarding certification issues
6. communicate recommendations and action of the Certification Board to the superintendent
7. represent the Certification Board to outside groups
8. provide for orientation and training of PLCCS members

Duties of the Certification Board: The Certification Board shall:

1. oversee the entire local certification process
2. maintain a roster of potential mentors (teachers who have been in the District for at least three years and have had mentor training)
3. plan for orientation for all teachers new to the District
4. assure that all persons with conditional, provisional or targeted needs certificates have a mentor
5. maintain records of mentees
6. assure that all professionals who request a mentor have one assigned
7. maintain all records in a confidential manner
8. maintain records of certification recommendations
9. serve as the first step of appeal in cases of disagreement
10. collaborate with the Professional Development Committee to assure training appropriate to staff needs

All decisions made by the Certification Board will be made in a professional, fair, and equitable manner. In the event that a staff member does not follow procedures for recertification, or disagrees with the Board on recertification credit approval, that staff member should address this concern to the building representative, or the administrative representative. The concern will then be presented to the Certification Board, as a whole, for reconsideration. If the staff member still does not deem the decision satisfactory, he or she may address the Board in person. For each Board decision, consensus will be utilized.

D. Induction Meeting

At the new teacher induction meeting at the start of the school year, provisional, targeted need, conditional teacher, and education specialist candidates will be assigned a mentor from the list of those qualified to serve. The District will provide formal orientation for provisional, targeted need, conditional teachers and educational specialists which describes responsibilities, roles, procedures and the process for achieving the necessary certificates. The certification chairperson will work with the PLCSS to suggest a good match for the new teacher from the mentor list and invite the mentor to the induction meeting. The mentor/mentee shall sign and submit a mentor/mentee Contract **by September 15**. The candidate may request that the Certification Board approve a change.

Certificates

Conditional (09)

- needs professional courses
- annually renewed
- needs PCAP and mentor
- copy of state evaluation letter to be submitted to Certification Board

Transitional (30)

- needs professional courses
- annually renewed
- needs a mentor
- copy of letter from state to be filed
- copy of state evaluation letter to be submitted to Certification Board

Targeted Needs (31)

- needs professional courses
- annually renewed
- needs a mentor
- copy of letter from state to be filed
- copy of state evaluation letter to be submitted to Certification Board

Provisional (32)

- needs initial PCAP
- needs a mentor
- mentor recommendation after completion of initial PCAP

Professional (34)

- five-year certificate
- within five years must earn 6 credits or equivalent hours with documentation
- does not need a mentor
- needs a completed Renewal Plan 1 year prior to expiration date of the certificate

E. Initial Professional Certification Action Plan (PCAP)

*“The plan must be based on Maine’s Ten Initial Teacher Certification Standards listed in **Chapter 118.**”* The Initial Professional Certification Action Plan (PCAP) will be submitted by mentees holding a Provisional, Conditional, or Targeted Needs Certificate or a Transitional Endorsement (optional) to the Certification Board each year of the two-year period.

1. After the Certification Board has approved a candidate's mentor, the plan will be written by the candidate in conjunction with his/her mentor.

Year one: The initial PCAP is to be submitted to the Certification Board **no later than November 1st** for review and signature. The final PCAP for year one, with evidence of completion, is to be signed by the Mentor and submitted to the Certification Board **by May 1st**.

Year two: The initial PCAP is to be submitted to the Certification Board **no later than November 1st** for signature. The final PCAP, with evidence of completion, is to be signed by the Mentor and submitted to the Certification Board **by May 1st**.

2. The Certification Board will either approve the PCAP or return it to the mentee with suggestions for change. The PCAP must then be re-submitted for review within 30 days.
3. Some teachers who are new to the District and the State of Maine may be eligible to be “Fast Tracked.” Fast tracking eligibility depends on their experience in teaching and the type of certificate they currently hold. The teacher must apply to the Maine Department of Education for “Fast Tracked” status. For more information refer to the *Fast Track Recommendation Form* in the Appendix.

F. Mentors

Teachers who have completed the Maine Department of Education approved training program will be included on the mentor list. Mentor membership shall be optional. Mentors must have three years of experience as an educator and hold a valid Maine teaching certificate at the professional or master teacher level. Mentors may serve as mentor to one new teacher candidate and one Master Teacher candidate, but not two Master Teacher candidates or two new teacher candidates, unless absolutely necessary and approved by the Certification Board. Either party may terminate this contract with 30 days' written notice. Non-school employees who meet the District and Department of Education criteria may serve as a mentor with permission of the Certification Board. School Board members, evaluating administrators, and Department Chairs may not serve as mentors. (***Chapter 118***)

Whenever a Mentor is needed, the Certification Board will approve a mentor from the approved list. The mentor shall sign and submit a Mentor Contract prior to being paid.

Teachers in the following categories will need a mentor:

1. Provisional certificate holders working towards a professional certificate
2. Conditional certificate holders seeking a professional certificate
3. Master certificate holders seeking renewal of the master level certificate
4. Professional certificate holders working towards a master level certificate
5. Teachers with transitional endorsements do not need a Mentor but one may be requested.
6. Targeted needs certificate holders seeking a professional certificate

G. Mentor Training

The Certification Board will provide training and orientation for potential mentors. Contact hours may be given for completed training. Teachers who have completed the Maine Department of Education approved training program or equivalent training approved by the Department of Education, will be included on the mentor list.

H. Mentor Responsibilities

Mentors will be required to sign a Mentor/Mentee Agreement form covering the two-year process **by September 15** of year one. Mentors will assist the mentee with writing the PCAP for submission to the Certification Committee **by November 1**, year one.

Mentors will monitor the implementation of the PCAP. If necessary, the mentee, in conjunction with the mentor, may revise/update the PCAP. The revised PCAP must then be re-submitted to the Certification Board for approval. Mentors will assist the mentee with PCAP evidence of standards completion for submission to the Certification Board **by May 1**, year one. Mentors will assist the mentee with writing the PCAP for submission to the Certification Board **by November 1**, year two. Mentors will submit the final PCAP to the Certification Board with evidence of all 10 standards completion **by May 1**, year two.

Weekly Contact Logs shall be signed by the mentor/mentee and submitted monthly by the mentor to the Board for review. A total of three formal written observations will be made by the mentor during the first year and at least three formal written observations will be made by March 15 of the second year. (Other informal observations may take place). The formal observations must be signed and submitted to the Certification Board on the required form by:

Year 1: December 15 - February 15 - April 15

Year 2: October 15 - January 15 - March 15

Release time for mentors to observe and to confer with the candidate will be arranged by the principal of the building or his/her designee.

The mentor will submit an Interim Report to the Certification Board documenting the progress that the candidate is making on his/her action plan at the end of year 1. At the end of year two, the mentor will make a written recommendation to the Certification Board indicating whether or not the candidate should be granted the requested certification.

The mentor has three options for recommendation:

- (1) a favorable recommendation
- (2) a negative recommendation
- (3) a request for a one-year extension

If a negative recommendation or a request for a one-year extension is made, the candidate may access the Maine State Department of Education appeals process.

I. Certificates

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- five-year certificate
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- does not need a mentor
- needs a completed Renewal Plan 1 year prior to expiration date of the certificate

J. Renewal of Professional Certification Action Plan (R-PCRP:R)

The renewal plan may be submitted prior to certificate expiration on a form provided by the Certification Board but no later than **May 15th**, one (1) year before the expiration date of the current certificate or the teacher will be referred to the Superintendent. The R-PCRP:R will list the professional development goal(s) and activities, and the proposed six (6) credits, nine (9) CEU's, or ninety (90) contact hours of approved professional development study (see below for definition) which the teacher will complete as part of his/her plan. At its next regular meeting, after receipt of the plan, the Board will either approve the Renewal Professional Certification Action Plan (R-PCRP:R) or return it to the teacher with recommendations and set up a meeting with the teacher, if necessary, for the purpose of making changes in the plan.

Approved study means:

(a) CEU's or credit hours of academic study or professional education in an accredited institution of higher education. Without an official transcript, contact hours will be assigned. Must have prior approval by the Certification Board.

(b) CEU's or credit hours in an in-service training program (workshop). Must have prior approval by the Certification Board.

(c) Non-credit contact hours must be pre-approved by the Certification Board no later than one year prior to the certificate expiration date and must support the R-PCRP:R. Evidence of the pre-approved hours shall be submitted with the Non-Credit Point Documentation form, attached to the R-PCRP-R.

Professional Development Requirements:

six (6) credits, nine (9) CEU's, or ninety (90) contact hours

CEU's: 1.5 CEUs = 1 credit

Contact Hours: 15 hours = 1 credit

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to renew the professional certificate, each teacher must complete at least 30 hours or the equivalent in one or two focus areas. A focus area would be a concentration on one educational topic. For example, a focus area could be a content area like mathematics, literacy, technology, RTI, behavior management, differentiation, etc. Each focus area will require proof of at least 15 contact hours or the equivalent. These contact hours can be accumulated through participation in a variety of professional development activities, such as District sponsored or out of District workshops/trainings, book talks, college courses or institutes.

The remainder of the renewal credits/hours can be obtained in any of the following methods:

College/University Courses: Three credit courses and three credit graduate level courses will be accepted. Copy of grade transcript or certificate of completion must be submitted and course passed with a B grade or better for graduate courses or a passing grade for undergraduate courses/recertification courses.

College Sponsored Institutes: College sponsored institutes will be granted credits based upon in class hours and/or documented time.

Mentor Program: 3 credits maximum, 1.5 credits per year

Workshops/Conferences: Participants wishing to earn credits for renewal must submit a certificate of completion.

Committee Work: (3 credits maximum): District or state committee membership will count for contact hours; documentation from the Committee chairperson with the total number of contact hours must be submitted as evidence of participation.

Individual or Group Project or Travel Experience: (3 credits maximum each 5 year renewal)(**Pre approval required**) A detailed plan must be submitted, which describes:

- educational need or problem
- observable/measurable objectives to be accomplished
- plan of action listing specific steps/activities to be carried out
- evaluation criteria for project and who will evaluate the project upon completion, a report must be submitted which includes information about teacher's personal development and the project's impact on students and learning. An evaluator's signature and Board approval must be on the final report.
- A specific project or travel experience may not be counted for credit more than once and may not be requested in future renewals.
- Paid employment or recreational activities related to your certification area may not be used for recertification credit.

Important Note: Keep in mind some courses and/or workshops may not fit your needs for recertification, and a certificate of completion in that case could not be used for recertification (i.e., workshop on planning for your child's college education).

*Specialty areas, (i.e., Speech and Language, School Nurse, etc.,) may require exceptions to these guidelines and will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Six credits or the equivalent **MUST** have prior approval by the Certification Board or these credits **MAY NOT** be considered for recertification. Forms for prior approval may be obtained on the First Class Email System. Teachers are responsible for retaining their own prior approval forms after receiving approval from the Certification Board.

All documentation of hours must be submitted to the Certification Board **by May 15** of a candidate's renewal year, or the Superintendent will be notified that the teacher's certificate renewal is in jeopardy.

K. Renewal of Conditional Certificates:

To renew a conditional certificate a teacher must:

- (a) complete six (6) credits of approved study (or the amount specified by the Department of Education)
- (b) receive Certification Board approval of a completed PCAP.
- (c) receive the recommendation of the Certification Board - conditional certificate holders will be assigned a mentor and begin the PCAP process (as outlined in section F)

L. Transitional Endorsements

The Commissioner may issue transitional endorsements upon consideration of a proposal approved by the Certification Board. Teachers needing a transitional endorsement do not need a mentor, but may request one.

M. Master Teacher – Initial/Renewal Candidates – Two Year Process

Renewal: Master Teacher (MT) certificates must be renewed every five years. Standards for renewal are the same as those for initial issuance and must also meet the same professional requirements of six credits or equivalent. The PLCSS will issue a letter of recommendation, which must accompany the initial/renewal form one sends to the Department of Education.

Eligibility:

- You must hold a valid Maine Professional or Master Teacher certificate in the same certification area for which the MT certificate is being sought.
- Have five (5) years teaching experience with at least two (2) in this RSU

NBPT Standards: 5 core propositions

- a. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- b. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- c. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- d. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- e. Teachers are members of learning communities.

Two-year Process

Option 1

You may achieve National Board Teacher Certification (10 year certificate) by following the guidelines in the appropriate content area at NBPTS.org (Ch. 115, Part I, 5.3, B.7). You must still renew your Master Teacher certificate every five (5) years.

Option 2

You must submit a Letter of Intent to the Certification Committee to pursue or renew a Master Teacher Certificate. It can be submitted five (5) years prior to certificate expiration. To allow for budget planning, it must be received **no later than three (3) years prior** to the expiration date of the current certificate, **no later than November 1**. (example: Certificate Expiration 7/2012: notify by 11/1/2009 – Process begins 9/2010.)

Requirements – After initial Letter of Intent, must also follow the same professional requirements of six (6) credits or equivalent.

Year One: two years prior to certificate expiration

1. Choose a mentor from the approved list.
 - * A teacher pursuing or renewing a Master Teacher Certificate cannot be a mentor for a teacher pursuing or renewing a Master Teacher Certificate.
2. Sign and submit Mentee Contract – **due by October 15**
3. Follow the NBPT Standards 5 core propositions and submit a Master Teacher Professional Certificate Action Plan (MT-PCAP) to the building representative **by November 15** for review and signature.
4. Be observed three (3) times and submit on the form provided.
One (1) by each of the following team members:
 - the certification team administrator – **by December 15**
 - the mentor – **by February 15**
 - a designated certification team member – **by April 15**
5. The final MT-PCAP for year one, with evidence of meeting core propositions, is to be signed and submitted by the Mentor **by May 15** to the Certification Committee

Year Two:

1. Be observed three (3) times and submit on the form provided.
One (1) by each of the following team members:
 - the certification team administrator – **by October 15**
 - the mentor – **by January 15**
 - a designated certification team member – **by March 15**
2. Submit the MT-PCAP to the building representative **by October 15** for review and signature.
3. Submit the signed MT-PCAP with evidence of meeting core propositions, your portfolio and checklist to your mentor **by April 15** supporting the following District requirements.
 - a. qualified and willing to serve as a certification mentor
 - b. have five (5) years of teaching experience with at least two (2) in this District
 - c. have done both of the following within the last five (5) years:
 1. attended a conference related to teaching assignment
 2. taken a graduate level college course and additional credit hours to meet the professional renewal requirements
 - d. have done four (4) of the following within the last five years:
 1. supervised a student teacher
 2. served on a curriculum committee and/or any other District committee
 3. served as a mentor
 4. published an educational article
 5. supervised a pre-professional experience in conjunction with a college or university
 6. made a presentation at a conference, workshop, or in-service program
 7. served in a leadership role
 8. other – subject to Certification Committee pre-approval on the Master Teacher Professional Certification Action Plan (MT-PCAP) submission. Exp: grant writing; school-based projects

The Master Teacher mentor responsibilities are to:

1. sign and submit Mentor Contract – **due by October 15**
2. support the candidate through the process
3. keep meeting logs – minimum four per year
4. follow observation schedule and submit on form provided
5. submit the Mentee's year one signed Master Teacher Professional Certification Action Plan (MT-PCAP) **by May 15** to the Certification Committee
6. submit the Mentee's final signed MT-PCAP, with checklist, portfolio, and mentor logs **by April 15** to the Certification Committee

N. Appeals

Any person who has been denied or been given notice of a potential denial of a professional or master certificate may initiate an adjudicatory proceeding by filing with the Department of Education.

O. Management

Reports: Meeting agendas and minutes will be submitted to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and will be available upon request.

Files: The Certification Board will maintain a file for each teacher. For probationary teachers, it will contain the Initial Professional Certification Action Plan (PCAP), a copy of their current certificate, and all other documentation required by the Certification Board as outlined in the Initial Teacher Packet. The contents of the file will be treated as confidential information. The file must be kept separate from each teacher's personnel file. It may be examined by the teacher, the teacher's designee, that teacher's support mentor and Certification Board members.

The PLCSS will complete annual program evaluations to assure quality, effectiveness, and efficient management. Evaluation will be organized and directed by the PLCSS. This will include a questionnaire at the end of the mentor/mentee cycle, completed by both mentors and mentees.

School Board Approval: A copy of this plan will be submitted to the Department of Education, with a copy of the minutes of the School Board meeting at which it was approved.

2.4(b) Amendments to the approved plan must be made according to the requirements of Sections 2.1, 2.2., and 2.3 of this rule, align with Chapter 125 (SAU's Comprehensive Education Plan), and be submitted in writing to the Commissioner for approval prior to implementation. Document that the School Board or other appropriate regional governance structure has adopted the PLCSS plan.

Glossary:

Accredited Institution: a degree-granting institution.

Applicant for Certification: includes any person seeking initial certification, recertification, certification renewal, certification upgrade, additional endorsements or reinstatement of a lapsed, surrendered, suspended or revoked certificate. This includes conditional, transitional, the conversion from provisional to professional, targeted need, professional, master level, and the renewal of professional and master level certificates for teachers and educational specialists for the purposes of this rule.

Conditional Certificate: a waiver of requirements for the provisional or professional certificate for teacher and some categories of educational specialists. Conditional certificates may be issued for a one- year term, up to five years total.

Contact Hour: means clock hour.

Credit Hour or Semester Hour: equals 15 contact hours or the equivalent spent in an approved preparation program, an accredited institution of higher education or an in-service training program or individual study program approved by the support system.

Educational Specialists: persons certified to provide professional services as: athletic director, school counselor, library/media specialist, literacy specialist, school psychological service provider, school nurse, special education consultant, speech/hearing clinician, or career and technical education evaluator.

Endorsement: a notation or attachment to a certificate issued which specifies the grades and subject area for which the certificate is valid. A certificate may bear one or more endorsements.

Fast Tracked: recommended for a professional certificate based Chapter 115, Part I, §2.22 / §5, 5.2B. See appendix MDOE form.

Individual Study Program: an internship, project or segment of independent study proposed by a teacher, administrator or educational specialist that includes a needs assessment, measurable goals, learning activities and evaluation.

Initial Professional Certification Action Plan (PCAP): the document created by the candidate, with assistance from the mentor, detailing the professional activities planned during the initial certification period to demonstrate having met Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards. This shall identify skills which need improvement and shall specify particular routes of improvement.

In-service Training / Workshop Program: a comprehensively planned program that provides professional growth and development for teachers, administrators or educational specialists. Program components should include awareness or knowledge, modeling or demonstration of activities, practice with structured feedback and application of new skills with peer coaching.

Master Certificate: a certificate which indicates that the holder is an especially capable and knowledgeable teacher or educational specialist. The master certificate is awarded for a 5-year period.

Master Teacher Professional Certification Action Plan (MT-PCAP): the document created by the candidate, with assistance from the mentor, detailing the professional activities planned to demonstrate having met the five core propositions of the NBPT.

Mentee: a teacher who is under the support of a mentor.

Mentor: an experienced professionally certified teacher, master teacher, administrator, educational specialist or other educator who has been formally trained in mentoring skills, and assigned to support and coach a fellow educator in reaching a higher level of certification. The mentor may be from inside or outside the School Unit.

National Board for Professional Teacher Standards: NBPTS.org

Professional Certificate: the standard certificate for teachers and educational specialists awarded upon successful completion of the provisional or, in some cases, conditional certification. The professional certificate authorizes service for a period of 5 years.

Professional Learning Community Support System (PLCSS): a locally-developed state-approved mechanism for assisting teachers and educational specialists to meet the requirements of 20-A MRSA, Chapter 502. The PLCSS shall be comprised of a Certification Board, administrators, Professional Development Committee, nurses and/or educational technicians.

Provisional Certificate: the initial Maine certificate for teachers and educational specialists who have not previously served in Maine. The provisional certificate shall be issued for a 2-year period.

Recertification: the initial re-issuance under 20-A MRSA Chapter 502 of a certificate issued under 20-A MRSA Chapter 501, which expires on or after July 1, 1988. “Recertification” refers to the transition process whereby persons certified under the old law and rules obtain certificates and endorsements subject to the more comprehensive requirements of the new law and rules.

Recommendation: an opinion by the support team or institution that an applicant for certification has satisfactorily completed the requirements for the certificate sought and is otherwise qualified to receive the certificate.

Renewal: the subsequent re-issuance of a certificate issued under 20-A MRSA, Chapter 502.

Renewal Professional Certification Action Plan (R-PCR:P): a renewal plan must be submitted one (1) year prior to certificate expiration on a form provided by the Certification Board.

Transitional Endorsement: any endorsement in which the applicant meets the professional education requirements of that endorsement, but not the standards of academic preparation. A transitional endorsement may be issued for a one-year period only, up to three issuances.

APPENDIX

All forms are available on the First Class Email System.....District Forms/RSU 18 Certification

TEN INITIAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION STANDARDS
MENTEE/MENTOR AGREEMENT FORM - New Teacher
WEEKLY CONTACT LOG-New Teacher
RENEWAL PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION ACTION PLAN (R-PCR:P)
INITIAL PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION ACTION PLAN (I-PCAP)
RECERTIFICATION PRIOR APPROVAL FORM