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MEMORANDUM

TO: School Leaders
 FROM: Christy Junkins, Executive Director of School Support
 Date: Wednesday, January 20, 2021

Re: Institute Expectations regarding Teacher Certification and coding in PowerSchool

Teacher certification has an impact on many different areas within a school. The purpose of this memo is to provide clarification on teacher certification percentages and the impact it has on different aspects of school operations. The Institute’s new process will require the schools to enter and update the teacher information into PowerSchool. The schools will be held accountable for the teacher data in PowerSchool.

Teacher Certification as per SC Charter School Law

According to the SC Code of Law [59-40-50 \(5\)](#) of the SC Charter School Law, which pertains to teacher certification, charter schools (non-conversion schools) must, at a minimum, have 75% of their **core classes** taught by appropriately certified teachers. In addition, the SC Charter school law provides flexibility for charter schools to allow up to 25% of its core courses to be taught by teachers who are noncertified in the subject area(s) to which they teach. As per the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Federal and State Accountability, these teachers need to **demonstrate content knowledge** for each core class to which they are the teacher of record. If content knowledge can be demonstrated, the teacher is considered, per the SC Charter School Law, “allowable to teach that particular course.”

Core Courses - The core academic subjects are English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, history, geography, dance, art, and music.

Demonstrating Content Knowledge – It is the interpretation of the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Federal and State Accountability that in addition to holding a 4-year degree, the charter school teacher must demonstrate content knowledge by meeting one of the options listed below. Content knowledge can be demonstrated either through previous coursework or through passing a content specific examination (Praxis II).

Demonstration of Content Knowledge (in addition to holding a 4-year degree in any subject)

| Coursework | Or | Content Assessment |
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| Option 1a: 4-year degree in the subject area Option 1b: Advanced degree in the subject area Option 1C: 30 credit hours in the subject area | | Option 2: Passed Praxis II assessment in the subject area |

Early childhood and elementary teachers currently only have the option to complete the Praxis II assessment to demonstrate content knowledge.

Career Technical Education teachers can be part of your non-certified percentage (max 25%) but must demonstrate content knowledge as outlined above.

Documentation: For teachers who fall under the 25% flexibility allowance, evidence of a 4-year degree and evidence of content knowledge must be on file with the Charter Institute. Proper documentation must be submitted to the Director of Human Resources at hrbenefits@erskinecharters.org.

Examples:

1. Teacher A is teaching a high school English course in a charter school but is not certified. However, Teacher A holds a 4-year degree in English. Since Teacher A has a 4-year degree in a subject that s/he is teaching, **Teacher A has demonstrated content knowledge**, therefore its allowable* (for up to 25% of the school’s courses).

2. Teacher B is teaching a middle school English course in a charter school but is not certified. Teacher B has a 4-year degree in marketing. Teacher B has also taken and passed the Praxis II exam (English Language Arts: Content and Analysis – 5039). Since Teacher B has a 4-year degree and has passed the Praxis II subject exam in the area that s/he is teaching, **Teacher B has demonstrated content knowledge**, therefore is allowable* (for up to 25% of the school’s courses).

3. Teacher C, an international teacher from Spain, is teaching a high school Spanish course in a charter school but is certified in South Carolina in the area of math. Other than the required documents for her certification in math, there are no other documents on file at the Institute. Since Teacher C does not have any evidence of content knowledge for Spanish (no coursework for Spanish or exam for Spanish), Teacher C **has not demonstrated content knowledge** in Spanish, therefore is not allowable. To become allowable, this teacher would, at a minimum, need to take and pass the Praxis II exam (Spanish: World Language – 5195).

*Any teacher in a South Carolina charter school who falls under the 25% rule, which means they are “allowable to teach that particular course per the SC Charter School Law,” is not considered certified.

If you are a Title I school, there are additional requirements for non-certified teachers. a must be notified using a Twenty Day Letter. The **Twenty (20) Day Letter** is required by *Title I Schools only*. If a non-certified teacher is teaching a core class or a certified teacher is teaching out of area for longer than 20 consecutive days, the school must send a letter to the parents. A template will be provided by the Director of Federal Programs through a Let’s Work Smart submission.

The Institute MUST monitor the 75-25 requirement. To ensure prospering monitoring, it is an indicator in the Student Success Profile. The accuracy of teacher information in PowerSchool can impact your school’s 75-25 requirement as well as other departments. Below is a list of departments that the 75-25 can have a significant impact.

| Area of Interest | Impact |
|---|--|
| Testing | School Testing Coordinators must be certified. Testing Administrators must be certified. |
| Special Education (SPED) | School SPED Coordinators and all school case managers must be certified appropriately to meet the needs of the school. |
| English Language Learners (ELLs), Title III | Title III Coordinators must be certified or working towards certification based on the SCDE timeline. |
| School Report Cards | Percentage of certified and non-certified teachers appears on the School Report Card. |

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| Title I | Non-certified teachers or subs who teach for 20 or more consecutive days must send a 20-day letter to parents and the Institute. |
| SC Lead | School level ADEPT coordinators will verify non-certified teachers through the non-evaluated tab. |
| Parents Right Know | Generic letter (Template provided) to parents explaining their right to know the credentials of a student's teacher. |
| Student Success Profile (SSP) | Meeting the SC Code of Law 59-40-50 is an indicator on the SSP. |
| SC Growth Measure (Pilot) | Teacher Schedules are collected from PowerSchool to obtain teacher growth based on their students' performance. If the data is inaccurate in PowerSchool, then the Student Progress (Growth) Indicator will be skewed. It could potentially cause your school to rate lower than it should. |

To ensure that each school is meeting the requirements of teacher certification outlined in SC Code of Laws [59-40-50 \(5\)](#), and for the Institute to monitor the additional requirements provide in the above table, the school must take the below action:

1. Teacher certification information will be collected through PowerSchool. Therefore, teacher information must be entered accurately and completely. The Institute will provide technical assistance to support PowerSchool entry and submission.
2. Current teachers must be listed as the teacher of record for each class they are teaching.
3. Documentation will be collected for the non-certified teachers to demonstrate content knowledge.
4. Quarterly acknowledgement form will be self-reported by the school signed by the school leader and the PowerSchool coordinator.
5. Verification forms will be collected on the 5th day, 45th day, and the 135th day.

As we continue to monitor teacher certification requirements, persistent non-compliance may lead to Institute interventions or sanctions (e.g. Notice of Caution or Corrective Action Plan)