

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education

PENN*LINK

To: Charter School CEOs and Principals

From: Dr. Kerry W. Helm, Director
Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality

Date: June 7, 2018

Subject: Clarification of Professional Certification Requirements for Professional Staff in Charter Schools

Pennsylvania law requires that at least 75 percent of the professional staff members of a charter school must hold appropriate state certification, 24 P.S. § 17-1724-A. This memo clarifies the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) policies regarding calculations for the 25 percent uncertified professional staff in charter schools of Pennsylvania.

Charter School Calculation Clarifications:

- Per statute, at least **75 percent of the professional staff members** of a charter school must hold appropriate state certification. Charter school law does not make any reference to or distinction between part-time and full-time staff members.
- Percentage credit is only calculated to determine the certified percentage for an **individual** professional staff member who is assigned to perform duties in an area for which they are properly certified and also assigned to perform duties in an area for which they do not hold appropriate certification.
- What is essential to the 75/25 calculation is whether an individual staff member is certified or uncertified in their assignment, regardless of full-time or part-time status.
- An uncertified staff member who only performs duties in areas for which certification is required is considered to be 100 percent uncertified for these assignments and must be calculated in the 25 percent, regardless of their part-time or full-time status.
- Conversely, an educator who is properly certified to teach every course assigned but is a part-time employee, would be counted in the 75 percent certified staff because the educator is 100 percent certified for all assigned classes.
- The calculation example provided in the previous memo would be calculated the same way accounting for part-time status by adjusting the number of

periods taught, and produce the same result for the charter school using part-time staff.

Calculation Example:

A charter school has 30 teachers. Twenty-two (22) teachers, or 73 percent, hold active, valid, and appropriate professional certificates for the subjects they teach 100 percent of their time. Three (3) other teachers are only partially properly certified because they work part of the time in areas for which they do not hold appropriate certification. To determine if the partially properly certified teachers enable the school to reach the requirement of 75 percent or higher, calculate the aggregate percentage for part-time people as in the example below.

- These educators only teach 20 periods out of a possible 40 per week in the school.
- Teacher A, certified in Chemistry, teaches Chemistry 15 periods per week (3 periods per day properly certified) and Mathematics 5 periods per week (1 period per day not properly certified).
- Teacher B, also certified in Chemistry, teaches Chemistry 3 periods per week properly certified, and other courses for 17 periods for which the teacher is not properly certified.
- Teacher C, certified in English, teaches English 10 periods per week properly certified, and other courses for 10 periods for which the teacher is not properly certified.
- Calculate the following:
 - The properly certified periods for partially certified personnel (Teacher A) 15 + (Teacher B) 3 + (Teacher C) 10 = 28.
 - Divide the total number of properly certified periods by the total number of periods taught per week: $28/20 = 1.4$ additional fully-certified "staff."
 - Recalculate the percentage: 22 fully certified + 1.4 partially certified = 23.4 teachers or 78 percent of all professional staff. The school is in compliance.