ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 290-3-2
TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

290-3-2-.01 Definitions.

(1) **30/18.** The semester hours required in a teaching field, including at least 30 semester hours of credit with at least 18 semester hours of upper-division credit.

(2) **Academic Major.** Refer to the definition in the Educator Preparation Chapter of the *Alabama Administrative Code*.

(3) **Accreditation.** A formal process conducted by a non-governmental, independent accrediting agency recognized by either the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to ensure the delivery of sound educational programs. Institutional credit in Alabama is through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). Accreditation may pertain to an entire institution ("institutional accreditation") or to specific academic programs or divisions ("specialized accreditation" or "programmatic accreditation").

(4) **Administrator.** When "administrator" is used in conjunction with "superintendent," "administrator" is defined as the chief administrative officer of a nonpublic school or nonpublic school system.

(5) **Administrative Experience.** Experience as a superintendent or assistant superintendent, principal or assistant principal, career and technical administrator or assistant career and technical administrator in a P-12 school system(s).

(6) **Alabama Educator Certification Assessment Program (AECAP).** The statewide testing program required by the Alabama State Board of Education for educators as a precondition for initial certification in each teaching field or area of instructional support. Official score reports must be submitted electronically from the testing service to the Alabama State Department of Education. Applicants must meet the requirements of the AECAP in effect at the time an application and nonrefundable fee are received in the Educator Certification Section. Additional information is in Rule 290-3-2-.02.

(7) **Alternative Teacher Preparation Organization (ATPO).** An organization the Alabama State Board of Education deems qualified to offer certification programs to qualified individuals in the state of Alabama in accordance with Ala. Code § 16-23-3.1 (1975).

(8) **Applicant.** An individual who meets **one** of the following definitions:

(a) An individual who submits an application or for whom an educator preparation institution or a prospective or current employer submits an application to the Section for any certificate, substitute license, or other license issued by the Alabama State Superintendent of Education.

(b) An individual employed by a local education agency or nonpublic school to act in any capacity in which she or he will have unsupervised access to children in an educational environment.

(c) An individual applying for admission to a State-approved educator preparation program at an Alabama regionally accredited senior institution for the purpose of earning a certificate after completing that program and meeting other current requirements.

(9) **Application for Certification.** Completed, current official forms and supporting documents, including official transcripts and documentation of compliance with the requirements of the AECAP, to substantiate a request for certification. Application for certification includes initial certification, renewal, changing to a higher level of certification, and adding a teaching field and/or an area of instructional support. All requests for certification must include at least the current application form(s), the nonrefundable application fee(s) as indicated on the current application form(s) and the completion of the criminal history background check. A request for certification will not be assigned for review until at least these items are received. The application receipt date is the day on which the current application form(s) is received in the Educator Certification Section. The Educator Certification Section is transitioning to an online certification platform; therefore, the receipt date may also be the date the application is electronically received through the online application system.

(10) **Area.** Any teaching field and grade level(s) or instructional support area and grade level(s).

(11) **Candidate.** A pre-service or in-service person enrolled in a senior institution for the purpose of earning initial or advanced certification in a teaching field or area of instructional support or for professional development purposes.

(12) **Career and Technical Education Teacher Certification Program (CTE TCP).** A program designed by the Alabama State Department of Education to offer alternative certification pathways for Career and Technical Education teachers, expanding opportunities for entry into and advancement within Educator Certification.

(13) **Certificate.** The official document issued by the Alabama State Department of Education to an applicant who has been deemed to meet all requirements for the issuance of the document. Printed information on the document includes the name of the applicant to whom it was issued, the date each area was issued, the degree level(s), valid period(s), and the specific teaching field(s) and/or area(s) of instructional support and grade level(s). Information on proper certification is in Rule 290-3-2-.01.

(14) **Certification Officer.** One person, designated by the head of the educator preparation unit at an Alabama regionally accredited senior institution of higher education with State-approved educator preparation programs, who is authorized to represent the unit. Responsibilities of the certification officer include but are not limited to:

(a) Verifying to the Alabama State Department of Education that an applicant for a certificate has successfully completed the State-approved program for the certificate sought and is recommended for certification.

(b) Verifying whether an applicant for an Interim Employment Certificate has met State requirements for unconditional admission to a State-approved program in the teaching field or area of instructional support for which the certificate is sought.

(c) Responding to requests for information from the Alabama State Department of Education.

(15) **Child Abuse Crime.** As defined in the *Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999*, as amended, any crime committed under the law of the state that involves the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or maltreatment of a child. Conviction of this crime shall cause an applicant to be deemed

unsuitable for employment. Additional information about suitability determinations is in Rule 290-3-2-.01.

(16) **Church-related/Parochial School.** Includes only schools which offer instruction in Grades P-12, or any combination thereof, through on-site or home programs and are operated as a ministry of a local church, group of churches, denomination, and/or association of churches which do not receive any state or federal funding. Refer to Ala. Code §16-28-1 (1975).

(17) **Criminal History Background Check.** Information received from the State Bureau of Investigations (SBI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), resulting from a fingerprint review. Additional information is in Rule 290-3-2-.02.

(18) **CTE 101.** An introductory training designed by the Alabama State Department of Education to equip new CTE teachers with the foundational knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage and grow a successful CTE program.

(19) **CTE TCP Level 1.** This program is designed by the Alabama State Department of Education for individuals transitioning from industry into education as new CTE teachers, providing a pathway to earn a CTE Certificate in a specific technical education or Health Science program area.

(20) **CTE TCP Level 2.** This program is designed by the Alabama State Department of Education provides advanced professional learning to help CTE teachers earn higher-level certifications while supporting administrators in recruiting and retaining teachers through opportunities for career advancement within Alabama's K-12 system.

(21) **Department, ALSDE.** Alabama State Department of Education.

(22) **DoDEA.** Department of Defense Education Activity.

(23) **Educational Administrator.** When used in this chapter or in applying Rules of the Alabama State Board of Education, the term applies to a person who holds a previously issued or current Alabama certificate as a career and technical administrator, educational administrator, instructional leader, principal, superintendent, or superintendent-principal.

(24) **Educator Preparation Program.** A State-approved program at an Alabama senior institution, a state-approved program at a senior institution in another state, or a program in another country leading to professional educator certification within grades P-12

as a teacher or as a provider of instructional support (administrator, counselor, librarian, psychologist, psychometrist, speech language pathologist, sport manager, and/or supervisor).

(25) **Form.** Official, required document(s) completed by or for applicants for a variety of purposes. Any reference to a form in this chapter means the current version of the paper or electronic form.

(26) **GPA (Grade Point Average).** In this chapter, all GPA requirements pertain to calculations on a four-point scale. Appropriate adjustments shall be made for other scales. The official overall GPA is the GPA posted on the official transcript of the degree granting institution that was used as the basis for granting the degree. The GPA may be rounded to the one hundredth place (i.e., 2.496 rounds to 2.50). The GPA requirement does not apply to an applicant holding a valid Professional Educator Certificate or Professional Leadership Certificate.

(27) **Health Science Program Area.** Refers to a field of study and training focused on health-related occupations.

(28) **Initial Certificate.** The first Alabama certificate in each specific teaching field or area of instructional support issued to an educator.

(29) **Instructional Leader.** When used in this chapter or in applying the Rules of the Alabama State Board of Education, the term applies to a person who holds a previously issued or current Alabama certificate as a career and technical administrator, educational administrator, instructional leader, principal, superintendent, superintendent-principal, or supervisor.

(30) **Instructional Support Areas.** The area(s) and grade level(s) printed on the certificate to which a person may be assigned and deemed properly certified. Area(s) include career and technical administrator, educational administrator, instructional leader, library media specialist, principal, school counselor, school psychologist, school psychometrist, speech language pathologist, sport manager, superintendent, superintendent-principal, and supervisor.

(31) **Issuing Authority.** The official state agency responsible for awarding educator credentials for grades P-12, or DoDEA.

(32) **K (Kindergarten).** In Alabama schools and as used in this chapter, kindergarten refers to programs for five-year olds.

(33) **Levels of Professional Educator Certificates.**

(a) Class B: Bachelor's degree level.

(b) Class A: Master's degree level program of at least 30 semester hours of graduate credit in a teaching field or instructional support area.

(c) Class AA: Education Specialist degree level program of at least 30 semester hours of graduate credit beyond the master's degree which results in an education specialist degree in a teaching field or instructional support area.

(34) **Levels of Professional Leadership Certificates.**

(a) Class A: Master's degree level program of at least 30 semester hours of graduate credit in instructional leadership.

(b) Class AA: Education Specialist degree level program of at least 30 semester hours of graduate credit beyond the master's degree which results in an education specialist degree in instructional leadership.

(35) **Mentor.** When used in this chapter in regard to a conditional, interim, provisional, or temporary-approach certificate the term "mentor" is defined as a teacher or instructional support employee of a P-12 public school or a P-12 nonpublic school who has at least three full years of professional educational work experience; has demonstrated effectiveness in the performance of his or her work; has demonstrated excellence in communicating and collaborating with colleagues; and is designated by the superintendent or administrator to provide guidance, support, and assistance in the development and improvement of the professional skills and understanding to a beginning teacher or instructional support person. The mentor should hold a valid certificate in the same teaching field or area of instructional support for which the individual to be mentored is seeking certification.

(36) **Nonpublic School.** Includes P-12 schools that are church-related/ parochial, federally operated, special schools that are supported by the state, and schools that are not public. Additional information is in the definition of church-related/parochial school in Rule 290-3-2-. 01.

(37) **Occupational Proficiency Assessment.** The measurable level of skill and competency an individual has attained in a specific career and technical program area typically verified through

performance on industry-recognized licenses, credentials, or certifications.

(38) **Official Transcript.** A college or university transcript that has been received directly from the issuing institution or from a Department-approved electronic transcript delivery agent that bears the college/university seal, date of transcript issuance, and the signature of the Registrar.

(39) **P (Preschool or Pre-K).** Any level prior to kindergarten.

(40) **Professional Educational Work Experience.** Acceptable employment in a teaching field or an area of instructional support. Additional information is in Rule 290-3-2-.02.

(41) **Professional Educator Certificate.** A certificate to teach in grades P-12 that is issued by the Alabama State Department of Education based on at least an earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited senior institution except as prescribed in Rule 290-3-2-.02. A certificate to provide instructional support (counselor, librarian, psychologist, psychometrist, speech-language pathologist, sport manager) in grades P-12 that is issued by the Alabama State Department of Education based on at least an earned master's degree from a regionally accredited senior institution. Issuance of the Professional Educator Certificate is based on completion of a State-approved approach to certification. Since January 2010, administrative and supervisory certificates are no longer printed on the certificate titled "Professional Educator Certificate."

(42) **Professional Educator Certificate.** A certificate to teach in grades P-12 that is issued by the certificate-issuing authority in another state or DoDEA based on at least an earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited senior institution. A certificate to provide instructional support (administrator, counselor, librarian, psychologist, psychometrist, sport manager, supervisor) in grades P-12 that is issued by the certificate issuing authority in another state or DoDEA and is based on at least an earned master's degree.

(43) **Professional Leadership Certificate.** A certificate to provide leadership (career and technical administrator, educational administrator, instructional leader, principal, superintendent, superintendent-principal, and supervisor) in grades P-12 that is issued by the Alabama State Department of Education and is based on at least an earned master's degree from a regionally accredited

senior institution and completion of a State-approved approach to certification.

(44) **Professional Learning.** Professional learning activities are sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused to provide educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed and meet the challenging state academic standards. The definition in its entirety may be found in Rule 290-4-3-.01.

(45) **Professional Learning Unit.** A Professional Learning Unit (PLU) is a content driven, long-term unit of professional study for instructional leaders that fully addresses all knowledge and ability indicators under an Alabama Standard for Instructional Leaders. Professional study that constitutes a PLU requires multiple professional development experiences over time and will always be aligned with the Alabama Standards for Professional Development. A PLU is earned at the completion of professional study which fully addresses the knowledge and ability indicators under an Alabama Standard for Instructional Leaders. The professional study must include comprehensive coverage and evaluation of effectiveness in the school setting. Professional study that earns a PLU must be approved by the Alabama State Department of Education.

(46) **Program Checklist.** An official document identifying all courses required to complete a State-approved educator preparation program. Program checklists are submitted by an institution and approved by the Alabama State Board of Education following a review. The official State-approved checklist will be used as the basis for issuing a certificate. Additional information on program approval is in the current Educator Preparation Chapter of the *Alabama Administrative Code*.

(47) **Proper Certification.** Proper certification is defined as having a valid Alabama certificate in the teaching field(s) and/or area(s) of instructional support in which the person is assigned throughout the school day. The current edition of the Alabama State Department of Education *Courses Catalog* shall be used to determine whether an individual holds proper certification for his or her assignments throughout the school day.

(48) **Reasonable Suspicion.** Reasonable articulable grounds to believe that a crime has been committed by the individual.

(49) **Receipt Date.** The date a document is received and date stamped by the Educator Certification Section or electronically

transmitted and received through the online application system. The date a fee is received in the Educator Certification Section.

(50) **Regional Accrediting Agency.** The six regional accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Department are:

(a) Middle States Commission on Higher Education

(b) New England Commission on Higher Education

(c) Higher Learning Commission

(d) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

(e) Southern Association of Colleges and School

Commission on Colleges

(f) Western Association of Schools and Colleges,
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and
Universities

(51) **Regionally Accredited.** Refers to action taken by one of the regional accrediting agencies and is specific to the status of the institution at the time credit or degrees were earned.

(52) **Renewal.** The continuation of a valid certificate, with a new valid period or the reinstatement of an expired certificate with a new valid period. Additional information can be found in the specific Rule.

(53) **Revocation.** The process of taking adverse action against a certificate, substitute teacher license, or other license.

(54) **Scholastic Year.** Begins July 1 and ends June 30 each year. Refer to Ala. Code § 16-1-1 (1975).

(55) **Section.** The Educator Certification Section of the Office of Teaching and Leading of the Alabama State Department of Education.

(56) **Senior Institution.** A college or university that confers at least the bachelor's degree.

(57) **State.** Any state or commonwealth, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, or territory of the United States of America.

(58) **State-approved Approach.** The various methods of obtaining a Professional Educator Certificate or a Professional Leadership Certificate that have been approved by the Alabama State Board of Education.

(59) **State-approved Program.** An educator preparation program at an Alabama regionally accredited senior institution of higher education that has been formally approved by the Alabama State Board of Education on the basis of Alabama standards. All of the courses in an approved educator preparation program shall be indicated on an Alabama State Department of Education form called a Program Checklist.

(60) **State-approved Program.** An educator preparation program at a college or university in another state that has been approved by the Department of Education in that state based on its standards.

(61) **Suitability Determination.** Determination issued by the Alabama State Superintendent of Education to employing superintendents, administrators, or applicants in response to a criminal history background check indicating an applicant's or current employee's fitness for employment as prescribed in *Alabama Child Protection Act of 1999*, as amended.

(62) **Superintendent.** Designed as the Alabama State Superintendent of Education in this chapter.

(63) **superintendent.** Designated as an Alabama city, county, or other public school superintendent in this chapter.

(64) **Supervisor.** When used in this chapter or in applying Rules of the Alabama State Board of Education, the term applies to a person who holds a previously issued or current Alabama certificate as a supervisor.

(65) **Supervisory Experience.** Experience directing an educational program at the central office level of a P-12 school system(s).

(66) **Teacher.** When used in this chapter or in applying the Rules of the Alabama State Board of Education, the term applies to a person who holds a previously issued or current Alabama certificate for a teaching field.

(67) **Teaching Field.** Subject(s) and grade level(s) printed on a certificate to which a person may be assigned and deemed properly certified. Additional information about proper certification is in Rule 290-3-2-.01.

(68) **Technical Education Program Area.** Refers to a specific field or occupation within technical or career-focused education that prepares students for employment in skilled trades.

(69) **Upper-Division.** Coursework designated by an institution of higher education to be at the junior or senior level of undergraduate study.

(70) **Valid.** In effect; not expired.

(71) **Valid Period.** The dates during which a certificate or license is in effect.

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