



## Classroom Tip

Renewing your teaching certificate

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Although you might have thought you'd be the one *giving* the homework once you stepped into the classroom, if you earned your standard teaching certificate after Sept. 1, 1999, you are required to complete some homework too: at least 150 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) during each five-year renewal period, or around 30 hours per year. The renewal date for each certification varies; it is calculated by adding five years to the last day of the certificate holder's birth month. For example, a teacher born in November who earned her certificate in 2007 will have a certification that expires Dec. 1, 2012.

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) has specific requirements that educators must follow for certificate renewal. According to SBEC, educators should complete at least 80 percent of their CPE hours in an area directly related to their certified content area. These standard areas include:

- Direct content area knowledge and skills (e.g., math content for a math certificate).
- Professional ethics and conduct standards.
- Professional development topics such as district and campus priorities; child development and learning theory; discipline and behavior management; applicable federal and state education laws; diversity and special needs of the student population; strategies for parent involvement; technology integration; student reading; diagnosing and removing obstacles to student achievement; and applied instructional techniques.

Good tools to use when diagnosing your professional development needs are your annual PDAS or periodic walk-throughs given by your administrator. Taking professional development courses that are interesting to you is also a good way to meet renewal requirements.

## How can I earn CPE hours?

- Participate in workshops, seminars, conferences and staff development sessions that enhance your professional knowledge and skills. Attend conferences such as the ATPE state convention, any staff development sessions offered by your administration, or professional development courses offered through your district or regional service centers. For a list of SBEC-approved providers (ATPE is one), visit [www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/certinfo/regprov.asp](http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/certinfo/regprov.asp).
- Complete undergraduate, graduate or training programs offered by accredited institutions of higher education. Each semester hour earned is equivalent to 15 CPE hours.
- Participate in interactive distance learning, online activities or video/Web conferencing sessions. ATPE currently offers 23 online professional development courses covering a variety of education-related topics. Visit [www.atpe.org/Resources/ProfessionalDevelopment/index.asp](http://www.atpe.org/Resources/ProfessionalDevelopment/index.asp) to learn more about these online courses and find other ways to earn CPE credit through your ATPE membership.
- Involve yourself in self-study. Twenty percent or 30 hours of your required CPE hours can be fulfilled through reading books or print and online publications such as *ATPE News* and *Essentials*. Make sure to keep a list of all of the literature you read as well as the number of hours it takes for you to complete each title. ATPE offers a printable certificate to help educators document their reading of *ATPE News* and *Essentials* at [www.atpe.org/Resources/publicationsCPEcertificate.pdf](http://www.atpe.org/Resources/publicationsCPEcertificate.pdf).
- Share your expertise as a trainer in CPE to earn up to 15 credit hours, or develop curriculum or CPE activities (there is no credit limit to this route).
- Provide guidance as a mentor, and earn up to 30 percent of your renewal hours.
- Serve as an assessor for a principal assessment process (no more than 15 credit hours).

## How do I renew my certificate?

All requests for certification renewal can be completed on the SBEC Web site (link to: <http://www.sbec.state.tx.us>). You have a period of six months after your certificate expires to apply for renewal. The current fee for certificate renewal is \$20 for teachers.

Make sure to keep a professional development documentation file throughout each five-year period. SBEC does not currently require educators to turn in written documentation of CPE completion with their renewal applications, but evidence would need to be presented in the case of an audit.

To learn more about SBEC regulations regarding teaching certificate renewal, visit [www.sbec.state.tx.us](http://www.sbec.state.tx.us).

*Information contained in this article is current as of March 2010.*