

***Professional Development
Requirements for Level III Teaching
Assistant Certification***



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In February 2004, the Board of Regents adopted changes to Part 80 Regulations that govern certification in NYS, creating new certificate titles for teaching assistants and teachers. Level I-III certificates replaced the Temporary License/Continuing Certificates for Teaching Assistants, yet Continuing Certificates are still valid for teaching assistants certified prior to 2004 and still regularly employed in a public school.

Individuals holding Level III teaching assistant certification are required to complete 75 clock hours of professional development every five years to maintain their certificate. Only Level III teaching assistants are required to complete continuing professional development for certification purposes.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FAQ

When must the professional development occur?

The professional development must occur during the five year period which is defined as beginning on July 1st after the effective date of the level III teaching assistant certificate (the date actually printed on the certificate). For example, the five year professional development period for an individual holding a Level III teaching assistant certificate issued on September 1, 2011 would begin on July 1, 2012 and end on June 30, 2017.

What type of professional development is acceptable?

For individuals employed in a public school or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the district's professional development plan (PDP) must indicate acceptable professional development.

For individuals employed in nonpublic schools, not regularly employed, or laid off from employment in a public school, professional development should be related to the duties regularly performed by a teaching assistant and can be in a content area(s) or pedagogy.

Can the professional development requirement be reduced or adjusted?

Yes. It can be reduced by 10 percent for each professional development year an individual is not regularly employed or laid off by a public school or BOCES. In addition, the hours can be adjusted for good cause upon request to the State Education Department (SED).

How is professional development reported to the State Education Department?

If you are employed by a public school or BOCES, the district or BOCES reports all of your professional development hours to SED via the Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) TEACH system. If you are not regularly employed (less than 90 days) or if you are laid off by a public school or BOCES, you must report your professional development hours annually to SED using the TEACH system.

What type of professional development records must be maintained by level III teaching assistants?

Individuals must keep personal records of completed professional development that include the provider name, date and location of the activity, description of the activity, hours completed, and attendance verification. These records must be retained for a minimum of seven years and be made available upon request by SED.

Do level III teaching assistant certificate holders need to re-apply to the State Education Department every 5 years to maintain their certificate?

No. If the 75 hours of acceptable professional development is reported on the individual's TEACH account the certificate remains valid.

Where can I obtain professional development if I am not employed by a public school district?

A Level III teaching assistant certificate holder may receive professional development from their employing non-public school, any public school district or BOCES, teacher centers, accredited colleges or universities, leadership academies, Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC), collective bargaining organization, (NYSUT-Education & Learning Trust), or other regional or statewide professional organization or comparable entity outside of New York.

KEY ITEMS TO CONSIDER

- ❖ Local leaders should be aware that Level III teaching assistants require professional development hours to maintain their Level III certificate.
- ❖ When possible, local leaders should look to include excessed members in professional development provided by the district. Failure to fulfill the professional development requirement will lead to a suspended credential.
- ❖ Level III teaching assistants should maintain personal records of completed professional development hours and annually check those personal records against records maintained or reported by the employing district.
- ❖ Section 80-3.6(h) the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education details an individual's due process rights in relation to the professional development requirement.
- ❖ If employed full-time in a public school, approved professional development opportunities should be identified in the employing district's Professional Development Plan (PDP). PDPs should ensure access to these identified professional development opportunities during school hours (unless otherwise collectively bargained). If a PDP does not identify such opportunities, members should work through their locals to identify the appropriate approval process for professional development opportunities.

RESOURCES

Maintaining Your Certificate - Teaching Assistant Level III Certificate Holders

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-ta3.html>

School District - Roles and Responsibilities: Professional Development

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-sd.html>

Frequently Asked Questions: Professional Development

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/faqpd.html>