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TO: All ACTS Member and Accredited Schools  
FROM: ACTS Leadership  
RE: Certification, Christian Philosophy of Education, and CEU Overhaul

We pray you are all doing well. It has been a busy and dynamic Fall Semester...being part of Educator Conferences in OR, NM, NC, PA, OK and CA; several accreditation visits around the US and International- TX, VA, LA, OK, China; State and National meetings with other private school associations (VCPE, TEPSAC, OPSAC, FAANS, CAPE, OPNE, CCSA, NCPSA, etc.); and many planning sessions with the ACTS Leadership.

It was during these Leadership planning sessions that we discussed and made very significant changes to our Certification Process. These changes occurred within the Accreditation standards, Christian Philosophy of Education requirement, and the Continuing Education Unit accumulation process.

In the pages that follow, you will find lots of information that will most likely create a plethora of questions. We are happy to entertain any of those questions individually, or you can hold those questions for one of our Townhall Zoom Meetings (schedule to be released early February).

Feel free to email our office with any questions:

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#### Affiliations:

Accreditation International – Arkansas Department of Education, Office of Non-Public Education  
Coalition of Christian School Accreditors – Cognia (NCA, SACS, NWA) – Council for American Private Education  
Florida Association of Academic Non-Public Schools – Georgia Private School Accreditation Council  
Hawai'i Council of Private Schools/Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools – Middle States Association – Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council  
National Council for Private School Accreditation – New Mexico Non-Public School Commission – Oklahoma Private School Accreditation Commission  
Pennsylvania State CAPE – Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Non-Public Schools – Texas Private School Accreditation Commission  
Virginia Council of Private Education – Western Association of Schools and Colleges

# **Educator Certification Process Revision**

## **Why review the process....**

Each year, we listen to member and accredited school heads about their staffing needs **and** potential partner school heads on their staffing needs in relation to membership and accreditation. Over the past two years, the largest conversation has been on the topic of qualifications. Based on extensive research and current trends, the ACTS Accreditation Commission and Board of Directors have approved these shifts and changes to the Certification Protocol.

## **Accreditation Standard: Addition/Revision of language and deletion of redundancy**

- The Addition of “Highly Qualified” as a qualification
- Standard 4.3 now states:
  - “Administration and Teaching staff shall hold a Bachelor’s degree or be “Highly Qualified” for the position they have been assigned to (Highly Qualified could be defined as previous teaching experience, special skill set, alternative career pathways other than education, etc.). Additionally, members of the Administrative and Teaching staff (core subject/grade levels & any High School credit-bearing course) are required to hold an ACTS Educator Certificate, completing the stipulations of the Certificate each term.”
- Standard 4.9: the current standard that discusses Administration qualifications and certification is combined with 4.3 and will be deleted.

## **Certification Stipulations: New pathway options for the Professional Certification**

- Biblical/Theological studies – 1 of the 2 options
  - 6 College Credit hours
  - 40 Certification Points in Professional Development subjects such as OT/NT Overview, Theology, Book of the Bible studies, Topical Studies of Scripture, etc. (Note: while Christian living topics are of great value, they do not meet the expectations of this requirement)
- Education Coursework– 1 of the 3 options
  - 9 College Credit Hours in Education Coursework – 3 credit hours of each of the following courses or equivalent courses: Curriculum/Instruction, Instructional Methods, Educational Elective
  - 40 Certification points in Professional Development subjects similar to the college course work above
  - Designated as “Highly Qualified” by your school administration based on prior educational experience, subject-specific experience, etc. (Evidence documents will be required to confirm this designation)
- Christian Philosophy of Education
  - See the new options on the following pages.

## **Certification Points: New protocols for professional development**

The CEU process has been completely overhauled. See the detailed explanation of the new process on the following pages.

# **Christian Philosophy of Education Requirement for Certification**

## **1. Coursework – Formal instruction of academic information related to Christian Phil of Education and/or Biblical Worldview Instruction**

- a. College/University
  - i. Christian colleges/universities typically integrate Christian Phil of Ed into their Foundations of Education course or will have a separate Christian Phil of Education course as part of the Education program.
  - ii. These courses would complete the requirement for this portion of the certification process.
- b. In Service
  - i. If you did not graduate from a Christian college/university with an education degree or did not earn an education degree from a Christian college/university, you can complete the requirement for this portion of certification through several options
    - 1. Complete coursework through an approved CEU provider for Christian Philosophy of Education training
      - a. this option requires Practicum portion
    - 2. Complete PD training sessions at your school, either presented by ACTS staff members or approved by the ACTS office
      - a. this option requires Reading and Practicum portions.

## **2. Reading – 4 books related to Christian Philosophy of Education and/or Biblical Worldview Instruction.**

- a. School Designated
  - i. An ACTS accredited school may choose to assign reading of books that relate to the school's mission, vision, and core values. The authors and titles are at the school's discretion.
- b. Self-chosen
  - i. If the school does not have a preference on the authors and/or titles of the books read by the applicants, it is the responsibility of the educator to choose titles and authors that reflect the expectations of the topic – Christian Philosophy of Education and/or Biblical Worldview Instruction.

## **3. Practicum – Educator can choose either option to complete the last portion of the requirement.**

- a. Written Paper
  - i. The Educator completes a 2-3 page paper that summarizes, culminates, depicts their Christian Philosophy of Education and how it will influence their classroom practices.
- b. Lesson Plan/Unit Plan Infusion and Administration Classroom Observation
  - i. The Educator will be deliberate in creating goals/objectives in their lesson plans that utilize the information they have learned through their coursework and/or reading. The Administrator of the school will be responsible for making notes during observations on how these goals/objectives were achieved during the lessons they observed. (2-3 observations are required during a single school year to complete this requirement.)
- c. Exemption from Practicum – If the educator has taught at the school for longer than 3 consecutive years in the same grade level/courseload and has had acceptable observation outcomes from administration.

## **Continuous Education Unit (CEU) Process and Procedure Overhaul**

### **Then...if you stop learning, you stop teaching...**

The concept of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) is not a new one, created by the US Department of Education in the 1970s. The idea of professional development has been around for much longer. In the past, CEUs could be earned in a variety of ways – conferences, through Professional Development (PD) at school, video, etc. For a school to offer its own CEUs, the school would need gain approval from the ACTS office prior to the offering. In addition to this process, the ACTS office researched and determined several CEU providers that would not need prior approval for CEU credit. This has been operational for many years. Once the CEU Pre-approval form comes to the office, it is approved, signed, and the CEUs are calculated (6 contact hours = 1 CEU) based on the information given by the school – number of minutes each session contains, number of sessions in the training (if applicable). The office then creates the certificate for the school to issue to the teachers and/or place in their personnel file. The record keeping process of CEUs for re-certification has varied across the family of ACTS schools...some digitally, some manually, some left up to the teachers to keep track of their certificates. This entire process is changing, effective immediately. We believe this new framework will be more effective, allow for school autonomy, and create a culture of collaboration rather than completing a “punch list” for certification purposes only.

### **Now...here are the facts of the shift we are making to the process...**

1. **The Name:** Continuous Education Units will now be Certification Points
2. **The Offering: for ACTS Accredited schools:** All ACTS accredited schools are now Certification Point Providers and can issue points at their discretion for PD throughout the year. Note - The ACTS Office will create Protocols and Guidelines for Certification Point Offerings to assist schools in determining PD events.
3. **The Math:** 1 hour of professional development contact equals 1 Certification Point
4. **The Collection:** Schools/teachers will be the primary data collection of these points – they can choose how to track those numbers as they determine appropriate. A data collection spreadsheet will be available from the ACTS Office should your school desire to use a constructed template.
5. **The Reporting:** All Certification renewals will be required to submit all evidence of Certification Points at the time of renewal. Schools will have access to their faculty/staff Certification Folder on the ACTS Google Drive. Additionally, questions will be added to the Certification application for teachers to answer if there are other requirements they were to complete (i.e. – education coursework, Christian Philosophy of Education, etc.).
6. **The Paper/Digital Certificate:** The ACTS Office will inform the administration of the school of Certification Points earned for events sponsored by ACTS – conferences, webinars, Accreditation Visits, etc. No certificates will be issued.
7. **The Total to be Earned:** 120 points will need to be accumulated over the term of the certificate (six years). Depending on the type of certificate, there may be a number of points to be earned that are specifically designated by the ACTS Office. The letter, included with the Educator Certificate, will stipulate the expectations of points to be earned.

### **Next Steps for ACTS schools...**

- ACTS schools that are in the accreditation process (Applicant, Candidate, Accredited), please supply the ACTS office with a Gmail account address (email sent previously) to gain access to the school's Certification Folder on the ACTS G-Suite Drive.
- If needed, request the CP Tracking Spreadsheet from the ACTS office to be uploaded to the school's Certification Folder on the ACTS G-Suite Drive.