

Frequently Asked Questions about Professional Development and Licensing

PI 34 - Wisconsin's Quality Educator Initiative

FAQ Categories

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School District Support and Mentoring for Initial Educators

1) Q: What are school districts required to provide to initial educators in Chapter PI 34 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code?

A: There are four requirements for school districts under Chapter PI 34. The district is required to:

- provide ongoing orientation that is collaboratively developed and delivered by school boards, administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents/families;
- provide support seminars which reflect the appropriate standards (teacher, pupil services personnel, administrator), and the mission and goals of the school district;
- provide a qualified mentor;
- designate an administrator who may serve, subject to school board approval, on the initial educator's Professional Development Plan (PDP) team.

2) Q: What is a qualified mentor?

A: A qualified mentor is an educator who holds a Professional or Master Educator License, is trained to provide support and assistance to initial educators and has input into the confidential formative assessment of the initial educator. The mentor is not part of the formal employment evaluation process.

3) Q: How are mentors selected?

A: The selection of mentors is a local decision. The district must ensure that mentors are trained to provide support and assistance to initial educators. Training should include knowledge and understanding of the Wisconsin educator standards as well as the Professional Development Plan process.

Professional Development Plan (PDP)

4) Q: What is the Professional Development Plan (PDP)?

A: The PDP is a process for renewal of an educator's license based on planned professional growth and evidence of the effect of that growth on student learning. License renewal is based on the documented completion of the PDP as verified by a PDP review team and submitted to the

state superintendent. The PDP has several required components which can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

5) Q: What is the process for completing a PDP?

A: A PDP has four main steps in the process (Reflection, Writing the Plan, Annual Review of the Plan, and Documentation of the Completed Plan).

When writing the Plan, the following five components are included: 1) Description of School and Teaching, Administrative, or Pupil Services Situation; 2) Description of Goal(s) to be Addressed; 3) Rationale for the Goal(s); 4) Plan for Assessing and Documenting the Goal(s); and 5) Plan to Meet Goal(s): Objectives, Activities, Timeline, and Collaboration.

Please note, an initial educator must have his/her goal(s) approved by a PDP team and a copy of the completed PDP goal approval form must be submitted to: DPI Educator Licensing, PO Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841.

For specific questions related to changing a goal/standards or requirements of the annual review, see the toolkits available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

6) Q: When is a PDP required?

A: Per PI 34 rules, any educator who is issued an Initial Educator License is required to complete a PDP.

Initial Educator – Anyone who completes a program for the first time in a particular licensure category (teacher, pupil services, or administrator) after 8/31/2004 is considered an initial educator in that licensure category and must complete a PDP to advance to the professional educator license stage.

Professional Educator – Professional educators who completed programs prior to 8/31/2004 have the option of completing either a PDP or six semester credits of course work related to his/her area of licensure to renew their license. Professional educators who complete an additional license program(s) after August 31, 2004 in the **same** licensure category for which they already hold a license (e.g. have a regular ed teaching license and add a special education teacher license) can renew both licenses by completing either a PDP OR six semester credits of course work related to his/her area of licensure.

7) Q: If an educator is adding a new license after 8/31/2004, is a PDP required for renewal in the future?

A: An educator who completes a license program after August 31, 2004 (e.g. has a teaching license and adds an administrative license after 8/31/2004) and has never completed an approved license program in that new category (i.e. teacher, pupil services, or administration) will be issued an Initial Educator License and will be required to complete a PDP to advance to the professional educator stage in that category. However, if the educator has not attained employment in that new category, s/he may renew his/her Professional Educator License by completing six semester credits of course work related to the area of licensure or could also complete a PDP that focuses on the teaching standards.

- 8) **Q: Can an educator who completed an approved program prior to August 31, 2004 choose to renew with a PDP and then switch back to the six credits system for later renewals?**

A: Yes, educators who completed an approved program prior to August 31, 2004 can switch back and forth between the PDP renewal option and the six semester credit renewal option for renewal of that particular license. If an educator selects the PDP renewal option it is important to remember the PDP is a five-year plan that includes annual reviews and activities completed over that five-year period.

- 9) **Q: Can an educator complete his/her Professional Development Plan in less than 5 years?**

A: Only an initial educator who holds an Initial Educator License may choose to complete a PDP in year 3, 4, or 5 of the licensure cycle to advance to the professional educator stage. A professional educator's PDP must be for five years. A professional educator who completes a PDP must remember that the PDP is a five-year plan that includes annual reviews and activities which are completed over that five-year period. For more information about PDP timelines, review the educator toolkits at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>

The PDP Team

- 10) **Q: How does someone become a PDP team member and what is the role of the team?**

A: Any professional educator or designated IHE representative wishing to become a PDP team member must participate in and successfully complete one of the DPI-sponsored PDP team training sessions offered around the state. A list of all scheduled sessions can be found on the DPI web site at: <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdptrain.html>. Professional educators and IHE representatives who have completed PDP training and are eligible to serve on teams are also listed on the DPI website. Additional resources relating to the PDP are included at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html> and information about the PI 34 on-line module and a self-assessment is available at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdptrain.html>.

Initial Educator PDP Goal Approval and Verification Team Role

Initial educators select DPI-trained team members for goal approval and PDP verification. The initial educator's team shall include a peer, an administrator, and an IHE representative. For more information on the role of the team, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

Professional Educator PDP Verification Team Role

Professional educators select DPI-trained team members for PDP verification – goal approval is not required. The professional educator's team shall include three peers. For more information on the role of the team, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

- 11) **Q: Initial educator PDP teams require an institution of higher education (IHE) representative as one of the members. Who qualifies as an IHE representative for an initial educator's PDP team?**

A: The IHE member on an initial educator's PDP team must be designated by a Wisconsin IHE and must be trained through the DPI-approved PDP team training. Each Wisconsin campus has

a contact person and a process for designating their members. More information can be found on the DPI web site at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/iess.html>.

12) Q: How is a team member on an initial educator's team selected?

A: The initial educator selects team members in all applicable categories (peer, administrator, institute of higher education representative) unless there are parameters within the educator's negotiated contract that identify a different process. For more information about finding DPI-trained team members, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

13) Q: Can the administrator serving on an initial educator's review team be that person's principal or must the initial educator find another administrator?

A: PI 34 does not specify whether or not the supervising administrator can serve as the administrator on the initial educator PDP team. However, it is important that the PDP process for license advancement and the district process for evaluating job performance be recognized as two separate processes.

14) Q: When do educators interact with the PDP team and for what purpose?

A: All educators seeking advancement from the initial educator stage or renewal of the Professional Educator License are responsible for convening a PDP team. Educators interact with the teams that they have convened as follows:

Initial Educator PDP Teams – for approval of the PDP goals before implementing the plan and for verification of completion of the plan in year three, four, or five of the Initial Educator License.

Professional Educator PDP Teams – for verification of successful completion of the plan in the final year of the license.

15) Q: How do educators “convene” a PDP team?

A: Initial Educators Convening a PDP team: When an initial educator is ready to have a PDP team review and approve his/her PDP goal(s), the initial educator will select DPI-trained PDP team members and submit the PDP for goal approval (see also question # 12 above). The PDP team members complete their review of the goal and return the plan along with the Goal Approval Signature Form with any comments to the initial educator. The same process is used for initial educators after January 15th of the fifth or final year of the license cycle for verification of the successful completion of the educator's PDP.

Professional Educators Convening a PDP team: The professional educator would convene his/her team after January 15th in the fifth year for verification of successful completion of the educator's PDP.

Both initial and professional educators may use a variety of means to convene the PDP team. Some educators may use PDP team members within their district and the team may meet “in person” to review the PDP. Others may select PDP team members who are located across the state and may elect to contact team members and then send them their plans. Also, some educators use electronic means to connect with PDP team members. All these means are valid ways to convene a PDP goal approval and/or verification team. For more information, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

- 16) **Q: Is it permissible for an initial educator to choose an administrator for his/her team who works outside their district?**

A: A district is required to "designate" a DPI-trained administrator so s/he is available to serve as the administrator on the PDP team for an initial educator in that district. However, the initial educator may choose a DPI-trained administrator from outside the school district. The initial educator's choice would only be limited if the team membership is defined in the district's collective bargaining agreement; this would be an employment issue, rather than a licensing issue.

- 17) **Q: What happens if an educator's PDP is not verified by two of the three PDP team members?**

A: An educator whose PDP is not verified by two of the three PDP team members should first explore whether there are changes that could be made in the documentation that was submitted that would allow a team to verify successful completion of the PDP. If this process is unsuccessful, PI.34 rule (PI 34.17(1)(c)) permits an educator to request a one-year non-renewable license if his/her PDP team does not verify that the educator has successfully completed their plan within the required five-year period – thus allowing more time to successfully complete the PDP or appeal the PDP team's decision to the state superintendent. This appeals process is outlined in PI 34.17(4)(d).

- 18) **Q: Is there compensation for PDP team members?**

A: PI 34 does not address the issue of compensation. This is an individual team member or local school district decision.

Initial Educator

- 19) **Q: Who is an initial educator?**

A: Anyone who completes a program for the first time in a particular licensure category (teacher, pupil services, or administrator) after 8/31/2004 is considered an initial educator in **that** licensure category and must complete a PDP to advance to the professional educator license stage.

- 20) **Q: How does an initial educator advance to the professional educator stage?**

A: The Initial Educator License is issued for five years. An initial educator can advance in 3-5 years as long as the PDP process is successfully completed. For more information, go to <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

- 21) **Q: What happens if an initial educator does not find employment during the Initial Educator License period?**

A: The Initial Educator License is a five-year non-renewable license **unless** the individual has not been employed in his/her license category for at least three years within the five-year period.

If an educator chooses not to work or cannot find a position, the Initial Educator License may be renewed with an application/fee at the end of the five-year period.

22) Q: If an educator is hired in the “middle” of their initial educator license, what options do they have for completing a PDP?

A: PI 34 requires that initial educators have at least three years of regular (not substitute) experience before becoming eligible for the Professional Educator License. If the initial educator does not have three years of regular (not substitute) experience during the five-year license cycle, the initial educator cannot advance to the professional educator stage. The initial educator can receive additional initial educator licenses in order to complete the three years of regular experience required under the rule.

An example may be useful in answering this question. A new candidate was issued a 2006-2011 Initial Educator License but does not get hired until 2009. In that case, the initial educator is in the fourth year of licensure, and, therefore, will not have at least three years of regular experience in which to successfully complete a PDP before the license expires. As a result, the initial educator may apply for and be issued a new Initial Educator License in 2011 - giving the candidate time to successfully complete three years of regular experience and the PDP in order to advance to the professional educator stage.

23) Q: What happens if an initial educator completes a program in Wisconsin, receives an Initial Educator License, and is hired for their first job in another state?

A: An educator may complete the requirements for advancement to the professional educator stage while working either in Wisconsin or in another state. An initial educator may work on the PDP while teaching out-of-state as long as the goal has been approved and the PDP verified by a Wisconsin DPI-trained PDP team (e.g. through the Quality Educator Interactive, a License Renewal Support Center, or the Wisconsin PDP). For more information, see <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

24) Q: What happens if an initial educator does not have their goal approved by two of the three PDP team members?

A: If an initial educator does not receive goal approval, s/he will be required to revise the plan and resubmit it to their PDP team.

25) Q: Can a teacher who holds an Initial Educator License and who completes an approved principal program apply for and be issued an Initial Educator License as a principal?

A: No. The educator would first have to complete all requirements to advance his/her non-renewable Initial Educator License for teaching to the professional educator license stage. If an Initial Educator License was issued in an administrative category to an educator who still was licensed at the initial educator stage as a teacher, there is no assurance that the educator would complete requirements for advancement to the professional educator stage as a teacher. The educator would therefore no longer be eligible for the administrator license since eligibility for a teaching license is a prerequisite.

Professional Educator

26) Q: Who is a professional educator?

A: Anyone who completes a program for the first time in a particular licensure category (teacher, pupil services, or administrator) before 8/31/2004 is considered a professional educator in that licensure category and will have the option of completing either six semester credits of course work or a PDP for license renewal.

27) Q: Can an educator who completed an approved program prior to August 31, 2004 choose to do either a PDP or continue to earn six semester credits for renewal?

A: An educator who completed an approved program in a licensure category (teaching, administration, pupil services) prior to August 31, 2004 is considered a professional educator in that license category and can either complete a PDP or continue to earn six semester credits for renewal. If this same educator completes an approved program after 8/31/2004 in a new category (teacher, administrator, pupil services), s/he will be licensed as an initial educator in that new category and will need to complete a PDP for advancement to the professional stage and for all future renewal of that license. See also questions 6 and 7 (above) for more information.

28) Q: Can an educator who completed an approved program prior to August 31, 2004 choose to renew with a PDP and then switch back to the six credits system for later renewals?

A: Yes, educators who completed an approved program prior to August 31, 2004 can switch back and forth between the PDP renewal option and the six credit renewal option for renewal of that particular license. If an educator selects the PDP renewal option it is important to remember the PDP is a five-year plan that includes annual reviews and activities completed over that five-year period.

29) Q: Can an educator who completed an approved program before August 31, 2004 and who holds a Professional Educator License but is not currently working in a school setting complete a PDP to renew his/her license?

A: Professional educators who are not currently employed in school settings can work with a License Renewal Support Center (LRSC), the Quality Educator Interactive (QEI), or Wisconsin PDP to design and document professional growth through the PDP. However, because a PDP is a performance-based process that takes place over the five-year period of the license, s/he will need to document the effect of his/her professional growth on students and their learning. This work can take place in a number of settings such as informal education experiences through museums or parks, after school programs, summer learning experiences, or substitute teaching. More information can be found on the DPI website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/pdp.html>.

Master Educator

30) Q: How does an educator obtain a Master Educator License?

A: The Master Educator License is an optional 10-year license. There are two paths to becoming a master educator in the state of Wisconsin: The National Board for Professional

Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the Wisconsin Master Educator Assessment Process (WMEAP).

The NBPTS route allows teachers to participate in a rigorous assessment process and receive NBPTS Certification. This option is available to teachers in most subject areas. There is a stipend to help offset the cost of applying for NBPTS certification as well as a stipend for candidates who successfully complete the process and remain as teachers in Wisconsin classrooms. For more information about NBPTS Certification (including pre-requisites), go to: <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/nb.html>.

WMEAP is currently targeted toward helping educators, such as administrators, pupil services personnel, and teachers licensed in subjects not available through NBPTS and who want to be master educators. Educators interested in this license must submit an application to the department. If accepted, the educator has up to two years to complete a performance-based portfolio that is then assessed by DPI-trained WMEAP Assessors. For more information about WMEAP (including pre-requisites) and links to guidebooks for administrators, pupil service personnel, and teachers, go to: <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/wmeapsumm.html>.

If someone is successful in completing either the NBPTS or WMEAP assessment process, that educator can apply for a 10-year Master Educator License. If the educator is not successful in the assessment, s/he still may renew their current Professional Educator License on the basis of completing the NBPTS or WMEAP application and portfolio process.

31) Q: What are the benefits and incentives associated with becoming a Master Educator?

A: Through the process of attaining the Master Educator License, educators demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an effective “master” educator. An educator who has obtained certification through NBPTS or has successfully been assessed through WMEAP is eligible for a 10-year Master Educator License. Further, if a candidate is successful in obtaining NBPTS certification, they are eligible for up to \$2,500 per year for nine years as long as they remain a teacher in a Wisconsin classroom.

32) Q: Who assesses the WMEAP applications and portfolios?

A: WMEAP applications and portfolios are evaluated by a three member assessment team who have been trained by DPI, nominated by a professional organization, and approved for appointment by the state superintendent. For more information about WMEAP assessors, go to: <http://dpi.wi.gov/tepd/wmeapsumm.html>.