



STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Michael Sentance  
State Superintendent of Education

October 11, 2016


Alabama  
State Board  
of Education

**MEMORANDUM**

Governor  
Robert Bentley  
President

**TO:** City and County Superintendents of Education

Matthew S. Brown, J.D.  
District I

**FROM:** Michael Sentance   
State Superintendent of Education

Betty Peters  
District II

**RE:** Act #2016-198 and the Provision Regarding Compensation for Earned Advanced Degrees

Stephanie Bell  
District III

On April 26, 2016, Governor Robert Bentley signed Act #2016-198 (House Bill 121), also known as the Pay Raise Bill. A portion of the act includes provisions regarding compensation for earned advanced degrees. We are in the process of analyzing the provisions relevant to the compensation for earned degrees. The act may be viewed at the following link: <http://arc-sos.state.al.us/PAC/SOSACPDF.001/A0011357.PDF>.

Yvette M.  
Richardson, Ed.D.  
District IV  
Vice President

This memorandum is to advise you of one provision regarding compensation for earned advanced degrees and its implementation. An excerpt from Section 1, Subsection (7)f., of the act states:

Ella B. Bell  
District V

*A teacher who has made progress toward earning an advanced degree before the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, as determined by parameters established by rule of the Department, upon earning that advanced degree, shall be entitled to the additional compensation without regard to the field of study for which the advanced degree was earned.*

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.  
District VI

The following provides the framework for implementation of the above provision:

Jeff Newman  
District VII

1. *A teacher who has made progress toward earning an advanced degree* is a person who has received graduate credit for a graduate level course with a grade of C or higher and that:
  - a. Graduate credit was not used for conferral of a previous degree.
  - b. Graduate credit was earned at an institution of higher education that was regionally accredited at the time the credit was earned.
  
2. Advanced degrees recognized for salary purposes must have been earned from an institution of higher education that was regionally accredited:
  - a. At the level of the degree earned.
  - b. At the time the degree was earned.

Mary Scott Hunter, J.D.  
District VIII  
President Pro Tem

Michael Sentance  
Secretary and  
Executive Officer

3. *Before the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year* will be interpreted as **prior to July 1, 2017**.
4. If credit for a graduate course is earned prior to July 1, 2017, the date (month, day, and year) must be clearly stated on the individual's official transcript. If the month, day, and year are not clearly stated on the transcript, a letter from the registrar of the institution confirming the date must be submitted to the Alabama State Department of Education.

No changes are expected at this time to the current Verification of Higher Degree process. Please remind your employees that advanced degrees earned based on graduate credit having been earned from a regionally accredited college or university **before July 1, 2017**, will continue to be recognized, without regard to the field of study for which the advanced degree was earned, as long as the employee holds a valid Alabama educator certificate. You should continue to forward those requests to the Office of Teaching and Leading.

This memorandum should be forwarded to each employee of your school system so they may be aware of these requirements. Information will be disseminated later this year regarding implementation of additional provisions of the act.

If you have questions or comments about the contents of this memorandum, you may contact [payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu](mailto:payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu).

MS/JAM

cc: Deans of Education and Certification Officers  
Chief School Financial Officers  
Dr. Sally Howell Smith  
Dr. Earl Franks  
Dr. Eric Mackey  
Dr. Pamela Fossett  
Mrs. Juliana Dean  
Mr. Andy Craig  
Dr. Mark Kirkemier  
Dr. Linda Felton-Smith  
Mrs. Shanthia Washington  
Mr. Ethan Taylor  
Mr. Dennis Heard  
Dr. Jayne A. Meyer  
Mrs. Shavon H. Cummings