June 28, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Memorandum #3: Act #2016-198 and Provisions Regarding Compensation for Earned Advanced Degrees

On April 26, 2016, former 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. The Act may be viewed at the following link http://arc-sos.state.al.us/PAC/SOSACPDF.001/A0011357.PDF.

Specific provisions of Act #2016-198 were addressed in previous memoranda dated October 11, 2016, and February 1, 2017. This memorandum is to provide you with the new Verification of Higher Degree (VHD) form and to advise you of degree correlation information.

Attached, you will find the updated VHD form that must be completed in order for an advanced degree to be recognized. This form must be received with all VHD requests. None of the previous forms will be accepted. Information regarding the Highest Degree for Pay will continue to be posted on the Certification Portal. The Certification Portal will indicate the degree and the date the degree was recognized, as well as the date the degree was earned.

Information regarding degree correlation will be posted as soon as possible at www.alsde.edu (Department Offices: Office of Teaching and Leading: Verification of Higher Degrees). The listings on this page will be updated continuously as additional degrees are reviewed and approved.

If you have questions or comments about the contents of this memorandum, you may contact payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu.

MS/JAM

Attachment

cc: Deans of Education and Certification Officers 
Chief School Financial Officers 
Dr. Sally Howell Smith 
Dr. Eric Mackey 
Dr. Vic Wilson 
Mrs. Amy Marlowe 
Dr. Dee O. Fowler 
Dr. Barbara J. Cooper 
Mr. Andy Craig 
Mrs. Shanthia Washington 
Mrs. Juliana Dean 
Mrs. Tracey A. Meyer 
Mr. Ethan Taylor 
Mr. Dennis Heard 
Dr. Jayne A. Meyer 
Mrs. Shavon H. Cummings

FY17-2084
## Verification of a Higher Degree

*For individuals who hold a valid Alabama educator certificate.*

### Local Education Agency

### Name of Professional Educator
*(for whom form is being completed)*

### Social Security Number

### Institution of Higher Education

### Regional Accrediting Agency
*(Institution of higher education must have been accredited by one of the agencies indicated at the time the degree was earned.)*

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
- Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

### Degree Earned

- Master’s
- Education Specialist
- Doctorate

### Major/Concentration Area of Degree Earned
*(as indicated on the official transcript)*

**Please check ONE option regarding the professional educator named above.**

- **Option 1** Earned an advanced degree **prior to** July 1, 2017
  *Any degree area is acceptable.*

- **Option 2** Earned initial graduate credit *(grade of C or better)* toward the advanced degree indicated above **prior to** July 1, 2017, and earned the advanced degree **on or after** July 1, 2017
  *Any degree area is acceptable.*

  *If you checked Option 1 or 2, please STOP, sign the form, and submit it.*

- **Option 3** Earned an advanced degree in a field of study for which the educator is properly certified:
  - Collaborative Teacher K-6
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Early Childhood Special Education
  - Elementary Education
  - Middle School *(English language arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science)*
  - Middle School Generalist
  - Special Education Alternative Achievement Standards

- **Option 4** Earned an advanced degree **in a field of study** for which the educator is teaching/serving or properly certified

  Certificate Area: _______________________________________________________

  Teaching Assignment(s): ____________________________________________

- **Option 5** Earned an advanced degree **in the same area** for which the educator currently holds a valid Alabama certificate

  Certificate Area: _______________________________________________________

*If you were not able to check Option 1 or 2, please see Options 3 through 8 and select only ONE, sign the form, and submit it.*
## Verification of a Higher Degree
(For individuals who hold a valid Alabama educator certificate.)

**Option 6**
Earned an advanced degree in:
- □ Arts (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts)
- □ Counseling
- □ Education Administration
- □ Engineering
- □ English for Speakers of Other Languages
- □ Language(s) other than English
- □ Library Media
- □ Mathematics
- □ Reading
- □ Science
- □ School Psychology
- □ School Psychometry
- □ Special Education
- □ Speech-Language Pathology
- □ Teacher Leader
- □ Technology

**Option 7**
Holds an advanced degree and a valid:
- □ Emergency Certificate
  Instructional Support Area: ____________________
  Teaching Field: _____________________________
- □ Interim Employment Certificate
  Instructional Support Area: ____________________
  Teaching Field: _____________________________
- □ Provisional Certificate in a Career and Technical Teaching Field
  Teaching Field: _____________________________
- □ Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field
  Teaching Field: _____________________________
- □ Provisional Certificate in Library Media
- □ Provisional Certificate in School Counseling

**Option 8**
Earned an advanced degree and is a teacher of a critical shortage area
Critical Shortage Area for LEA: ____________________
- □ Teaching field is on the statewide list of critical shortage areas for LEA.
- □ Letter is being submitted for approval as this is a critical shortage area for the LEA and the individual does not fit into any of the other advanced pay options.

Signature: ________________________________ Date: _______________________

LEA Superintendent

************************** FOR SDE USE ONLY **************************

□ The degree indicated above has NOT been verified because the SDE has not been able to confirm that the institution is regionally accredited.
□ The SDE has verified and recognizes that this professional educator received the aforementioned degree from a regionally accredited institution.

Signature: ________________________________ Date: _______________________

For the Alabama State Department of Education

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Mail this form and an original, official transcript* to:
State Department of Education
Educator Preparation Section
Post Office Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

NOTE: The Highest Degree for Pay is posted on the Certification Portal. The Certification Portal will indicate the degree and the date the degree was recognized, as well as the date when the degree was earned. This form will not be returned after the State Department of Education has recognized a higher degree from a regionally accredited institution.

*An original, official transcript is enclosed because the Certification Portal verifies that the transcript is not on file with Educator Certification.