August 2, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Eric G. Mackey  
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: Verification of Higher Degrees for Pay Purposes

I suspect that you are well aware that in 2016, the Alabama Legislature changed requirements pertaining to master’s and higher degrees that may be recognized to award pay at a higher level. For those of you who may be less aware of that change, I am providing a copy of the current form that is to be completed. Although it is not necessary to submit a verification of higher degree (VHD) form for teachers or other professional staff who complete requirements for and are issued a higher level of Alabama educator certificate based partially on degree completion, members of my staff are pleased to receive and process VHD degree forms for those educators.

Until just recently, most of the individuals for whom we received VHD requests qualified under Option 1 or 2 because they earned an advanced degree before July 1, 2017, or because they earned credit for at least one course used to meet the most recent advanced degree requirements before July 1, 2017. Now, many individuals for whom we receive VHD requests earned credit for their first course and earned their degree after July 2017.

The VHD form and related information are accessible via this link: https://www.alsde.edu/ofc/otl/Pages/vhd-all.aspx?navtext=Verification+of+Higher+Degrees. Please call this information to the attention of your professional staff members, especially to the Degree Correlation information and the actual request form. Teachers should be cautioned to avoid generic degrees such as a degree in teaching and learning or a degree in curriculum and instruction, especially when those generic degrees do not reflect a significant concentration of courses as verified by course prefixes and titles, specific to one of the options listed on the VHD form. You might also remind employees that recognition of a higher degree does not ensure receipt of a higher level of certificate.

If you or your employees have questions, please send them to payforadvanceddegrees@alsde.edu.

EGM/JAM/SG

Enclosure

cc: Deans of Education  
Dr. Daniel Boyd  
Mr. Andy Craig  
Dr. Jayne A. Meyer  
Ms. Shavon H. Cummings

FY19-2131
## Verification of a Higher Degree

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Education Agency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Professional Educator <em>(for whom form is being completed)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution of Higher Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Accrediting Agency <em>(Institution of higher education must have been accredited by one of the agencies indicated at the time the degree was earned.)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Association of Colleges and Schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New England Association of Schools and Colleges</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Association of Schools and Colleges</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Earned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major/Concentration Area of Degree Earned <em>(as indicated on the official transcript)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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.*

### 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.

- **Option 3** Subject matter of advanced degree shall be liberally construed for these teaching fields.
  - 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: __________________________________________
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
☐ Interim Employment Certificate
☐ Provisional Certificate in a Career and Technical Teaching Field
☐ Provisional Certificate in a Teaching Field
☐ Provisional Certificate in Library Media
☐ Provisional Certificate in School Counseling

In the:
Instructional Support Area of: ____________  OR
Teaching Field of: ________________________

☐ 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 cannot verify the degree indicated above because it does not meet any of the eight (8) options listed above
nor does it meet any of the options listed on the Degree Correlation Table accessible via the following
link: www.alsde.edu/ofc/otl/Pages/dc.aspx.

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

Mail this form and an original, official transcript* to:
Alabama 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 Alabama 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.

Revised 6/2018