

Dance Teacher Certification in Connecticut

Information for Administrators and Prospective Teachers

(Updated March 19, 2008)

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I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The field of dance education is taking an exciting step forward in Connecticut's public schools. An increasing number of school systems have been including dance and movement education in their grades K – 12 arts curriculum. To support this activity, and to comply with the requirements of federal education legislation known as “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB), the Connecticut State Department of Education worked for several years with educators and the dance community to develop guidelines for teacher certification in dance, thereby ensuring that well-prepared educators deliver in-school dance programs.

According to federal law, all public school teachers in core subjects are required to be “Highly Qualified,” i.e., certified in the subject area they teach. Certification is literally a “license” to be a public school teacher within a state. Because the NCLB law includes the arts among the core subjects, dance teachers will be required to be certified in dance, just as math teachers must be certified in math, science teachers certified in science, and art teachers in art. By implementing dance certification, Connecticut joins the vast majority of other states that offer teacher certification in dance.

Although Connecticut will not *require* certification in dance until 2010, it will be *offering* dance certification under a unique endorsement (code #110). The requirement for all dance teachers to hold a valid certificate specifically in dance will become effective as soon as new regulations are in place; teachers who already hold the unique endorsement in dance will automatically receive the new dance certification.

The *National Standards for Arts Education* document has this to say on the status of the arts within school curricula:

"With the passage of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, the arts are written into federal law. The law acknowledges that the arts are a core subject, as important to education as English, mathematics, history, civics and government, geography, science, and foreign language."

In 2002, the Connecticut State Board of Education published the *Guide to K – 12 Program Development in the Arts*, which presents the arts goals and standards in Connecticut's *Common Core of Learning* and the *Connecticut K – 12 Curriculum Framework* (1998). [You can find these documents

online by going to www.sde.ct.gov and clicking on “Curriculum.”] In this document the four art forms that constitute the arts are defined as dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts – exactly as the arts are defined in federal documents, including the *National Standards for Arts Education* and the documents related to the 1997 *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* in the Arts.

The requirement of certification in dance supports the premise that dance is a core subject, on a par not only with music and art, but also with mathematics and English — i.e., it is a subject which should be taught as a regular part of the academic curriculum — and that it should be taught in the public schools by specially certified professional educators (as recognized by state law).

Connecticut’s *Guide to K – 12 Program Development in the Arts* already presents a vision, philosophy and standards for Dance. These standards describe developmentally appropriate movement experiences for children from very young to adolescence. They are the framework for an arts curriculum that promotes, fosters and supports dance knowledge, artistic appreciation, education, programs, careers, and the sheer enjoyment of dancing. The standards reflect the educational goals of such organizations as the National Dance Association; the American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; and the National Dance Education Organization. They outline the basic skills in movement/dance that all children should have the opportunity to learn and enjoy. They do not dictate the specific genre (such as ballet, modern, folk or national dance), but they do create the architecture for the delivery of coherent, meaningful, high quality dance. One important remaining step in assuring quality dance education in all public schools is teacher certification.

The creation of dance teacher certification takes dance and the dance educator to another level in several ways:

- By ensuring that children are taught dance and movement by well-educated teaching professionals;
- By elevating the status of dance to the same level as art and music in the public schools’ core curriculum; and
- By positioning the teacher to be able to join the regular faculty of a public school on a long-term basis.

Teachers who are already certified in physical education and who currently teach dance courses as part of their load would be wise to begin taking the necessary courses soon in preparation for the anticipated requirement of dance certification, if they have not already completed the 30 semester hours of dance credit necessary to qualify for a unique endorsement in dance. Schools that offer dance experiences delivered by visiting guest artists or contracted artist-consultants may continue to do so if such experiences are taught as occasional enrichment programs or as an enhancement to in-school curriculum taught by certified dance teachers. Dance certification – although desirable – will not be required to direct after-school dance programs that are not offered for credit.

II. CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS

In order to be qualified for public school teacher certification, an applicant must possess several credentials. For example, *an applicant for teacher certification in any subject, including dance, must hold a college degree from an accredited university.*

Years of work by a large committee consisting of dance educators of various backgrounds, arts administrators, and other interested supporters of arts education have resulted in a set of dance teacher standards and Dance Certification Guidelines that meet Connecticut's rigorous standards for certification as well as federal NCLB requirements.

The following are content-specific criteria proposed for dance certification:

Required Dance Content Coursework

"For dance, an applicant shall present a subject area major or its equivalent in dance, including coursework in each of the following:*

- a) applied study in ballet;
- b) two applied courses in modern dance;
- c) applied study in a third folkloric or classical world dance form (e.g., tap, jazz, ballroom/social, African, flamenco, Balinese);
- d) composition/choreographic principles and dance improvisation;
- e) dance history/cultures representing a variety of periods and ethnic groups;
- f) applied anatomy/kinesiology; and
- g) nutrition in a wellness or fitness context; and
- h) dance education methods/curriculum (including elementary and secondary)."

[* Note: Any "course" or "coursework" must be earned from accredited colleges/universities. Most professional/studio schools, such as Boston Ballet and Alvin Ailey, are not accredited as higher education institutions.]

III. PATHS TO DANCE CERTIFICATION

If an interested applicant has a college degree and can meet the criteria outlined in the Dance Certification Guidelines, s/he may pursue dance certification from the State of Connecticut. Eventually, as Connecticut colleges establish planned programs leading to certification in dance, these criteria will be met as a regular part of the dance major degree path.

Currently, and until dance certification regulations are officially in place, the possible ways in which a candidate can qualify for certification to teach dance in Connecticut public schools are as follows:

1. A candidate who presents current dance certification from one of the 30+ states with which Connecticut has an Interstate Agreement, where the candidate has completed an approved teacher preparation program in dance, will be eligible for a "unique endorsement" certification in Connecticut.
2. A candidate who:
 - a. presents a transcript demonstrating s/he has completed a major or 30 semester hours of credit in dance;
 - b. satisfies the other certification requirements typical for a certificate holder in a special subject (required tests, 18 semester hours of credit in education courses – see excerpt from regulations on last page of this document – etc.); and
 - c. has completed at least 20 months of successful full-time (or 40 months of part-time) grade and subject appropriate teaching experience completed in an approved nonpublic school or public school under a state certificate or authorization can apply under the "unique endorsement."

[Note: A candidate who has completed everything required for unique endorsement or dance certification except the required course in special education may be allowed to teach "with a deficiency" for a period of one year while completing that course.]

3. A one-year Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP) may be requested on behalf of an applicant by an employing Connecticut public school district if an individual meets the following minimum eligibility requirements:
 - Holds a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution;
 - Passed Praxis I PPST or obtained the Praxis I waiver;
 - Completed 12 semester hours of credit in the subject to be taught under a DSAP; and
 - Provide evidence of enrollment into the Formal Pathway at CCSU/NVCC.

Please note that a DSAP (ED 177) may be issued to a Connecticut board of education for one year on behalf of an applicant and may be renewed up to two additional times, so long as the applicant has completed at least 9 semester hours of credit in the Formal Pathway under each DSAP.

4. A teacher who already holds Connecticut certification to teach in any subject area other than dance, and who has also completed 30 semester hours of credit in dance, will be able to apply for a "cross endorsement" (i.e., additional area of certification) in dance. [Note: This is the path that most physical education teachers will use to add dance certification.]

IV. GENERAL CERTIFICATION INFORMATION

State Department of Education
Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification
(860) 713-6969 Monday-Friday from 12-4 p.m., except Wednesdays

Certification Web site: go to www.sde.ct.gov and click on link titled **CERTIFICATION**

General email address: teacher.cert@ct.gov

Patty Wilson, Certification Consultant for Dance: patricia.m.wilson@ct.gov

For information about the **Praxis I Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST)**, visit the Certification web site (see above); click on **ASSESSMENTS**; then click on the links to Praxis I information. To register for the test, click on **ETS - Educational Testing Service**.

For information about the **Praxis I waiver**, visit the Certification web site (see above); click on **ASSESSMENTS**; click on **PRAXIS I WAIVER APPLICATION – ED 192**.

Special Subjects

Sec. 10-145d-456. Initial educator certificate requirements

On and after July 1, 1993, to receive an initial educator certificate for a special subject or field an applicant shall present evidence of meeting the following requirements, in addition to meeting the assessment requirement (Praxis I PPST or qualify for Praxis I waiver):

- (a) Holds a bachelor's degree from an approved institution;
- (b) Has a minimum of 39 semester hours of credit in general academic courses in five of the six areas listed below, including a course in United States history. On and after July 1, 1998, a survey course in United States history comprised of not fewer than three semester hours of credit shall be included.
 - (1) Natural sciences;
 - (2) Social studies;
 - (3) Fine arts;
 - (4) English;
 - (5) Mathematics; and
 - (6) Foreign language;
- (c) Has completed a subject area major awarded by an approved institution in the subject area for which endorsement is sought;
- (d) Has a minimum of 18 semester hours of credit in professional education in a planned program of study and experience to be distributed among each of the following:
 - (1) Foundations of education. This group includes areas such as: (1) philosophy of education, (2) school effectiveness, (3) history of education and (4) comparative education;
 - (2) Educational psychology. This group includes areas such as: (1) growth and development of children from birth through the life span, (2) psychology of learning, (3) child-adolescent psychology and (4) mental hygiene;
 - (3) Curriculum and methods of teaching. This group includes areas such as: (1) subject-area curriculum and methodology and (2) effective teaching skills;
 - (4) Supervised observation, participation and full-time responsible student teaching totaling at least six but not more than 12 semester hours of credit; and
 - (5) A course of study in special education comprised of not fewer than 36 clock hours, which shall include study in understanding the growth and development of exceptional children, including handicapped and gifted and talented children and children who may require special education, and methods for identifying, planning for and working effectively with special-needs children in the regular classroom.