

DIOCESAN CERTIFICATE FOR RELIGION: ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

Catholic schools exist first and foremost for handing on the doctrine and principles of our Catholic faith. Therefore, it is important that all professional employees have a correct understanding of the Catholic faith. All professional employees are catechists charged with the responsibility for promoting and upholding the understanding of the doctrine and principles of the Catholic faith in their teaching and practice.

All Catholic professional employees, religious or lay, are required to obtain the Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion during the first four (4) years of their employment. The Experienced Certificate for Religion must be obtained within the next three (3) years. Thereafter, the professional employee is expected to pursue the Ongoing Certificate for Religion.

Catholic professional employees currently on staff, with three (3) or more years of teaching experience, who have not yet obtained the Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion, are required to work toward this goal with a minimum of two courses annually. They must obtain the Certificate within four years of the promulgation of this policy.

Failure to make a serious effort to obtain the Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion may result ultimately in termination of employment. The following is to be applied in assuring that all professional employees obtain the mandated Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion:

1. If, after the second year of employment, the professional employee has not completed two courses of approved catechetical instruction, the Principal will issue a written warning stating that the employee's salary step may be frozen after the fourth year and that the employee may be terminated after the fifth year, if the employee does not obtain the required Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion.
2. If, after the third year of employment, the professional employee has not completed four courses of approved catechetical instruction, the Principal will issue a second written warning repeating the above consequences if the Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion is not obtained.
3. If, after the fourth year of employment, the professional employee has not received the mandated Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion, the employee's salary may be frozen at his/her current step until the certificate is received.
4. If, after the fifth year of employment, the professional employee has still not obtained the Diocesan Basic Certificate for Religion, the employee may be terminated.

Professional employees of a religion other than Catholic are required to obtain the Special Certificate for Religion (two required catechetical courses) during the first three (3) years of their employment. Current professional employees are required to obtain the Special Certificate within three years of the promulgation of this policy. The courses required are Overview of the Catholic Church and Sacred Scriptures. Failure to meet these requirements within the specified time may result in a frozen salary step or termination of employment.

1. If, after the second year of employment, the professional employee has not completed one course of the required catechetical instruction, the Principal will issue a written warning stating that the employee's salary step may be frozen after the third year and that the employee may be terminated after the fourth year, if the employee does not obtain the required Diocesan Special Certificate for Religion.

2. If, after the third year of employment, the professional employee has not completed the two courses of approved catechetical instruction, the employee's salary may be frozen at his/her current step until the certificate is received.

3. If, after the fourth year of employment, the professional employee has not received the mandated Diocesan Special Certificate for Religion, the employee may be terminated.

Reciprocity may be extended to those professional employees holding a certificate from another diocese if that certificate meets the requirements of the Harrisburg Diocesan Certificate for Religion. The Director of the Office of Catechetical Training will make this determination after evaluating the individual's previous credentials.