

Frequently Asked Questions

Professional Development Points (PDPs) for Tennessee Educators

[Educator Licensure Policy 5.502](#) describes the use of professional development points (PDPs) for educator licensure advancement or renewal. Once educators staffed in Tennessee school districts enter their PDPs into TNCompass, appropriate district staff approve or deny PDPs based on state guidelines.

Earning PDPs

1. *What qualifies as acceptable activities for PDPs?*

To earn PDPs, an activity **must** be related to improving educator effectiveness by:

- a. developing content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, or pedagogical content knowledge; **or**
- b. enhancing educator effectiveness (e.g., world language courses for those working with students for whom English is a second language, or coursework that supports understanding and use of data).

The following table provides information about how PDPs may be earned and identifies acceptable PDP options, number of PDPs awarded, and required documentation.

Option	PDPs Awarded	Required Documentation
Professional Learning	1 clock hour = 1 PDP	Certificate, transcript, or verification signed by the director of schools (or designee)
Professional Learning	1 micro-credential earned through a state-approved provider = 5 PDPs	Digital certificate provided by state-approved micro-credentials provider
Continuing Education	1 continuing education unit (CEU) = 5 PDPs	Certificate or transcript
College/University Coursework	1 semester hour credit = 10 PDPs	Transcript
Overall level of effectiveness rating (approved TN model)	Overall Score of 5 = 20 PDPs Overall Score of 4 = 15 PDPs Overall Score of 3 = 10 PDPs	Information is maintained by the department. No additional documentation is required; points may be accrued annually.
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification	Initial Certification = 30 PDPs Renewal Certification = 15 PDPs	Official documentation from NBPTS

2. *When can I earn PDPs?*

To be valid for renewal or advancement of a Tennessee license, PDPs must be earned during the validity period of the license. For example, if a license is valid from Sept. 1, 2015 to Aug. 31, 2021, only PDPs earned during that time can be used to renew or advance a license.

3. Can I earn PDPs while attending professional learning activities (i.e., conferences) for which I receive compensation?

Yes, you can receive PDPs while attending learning activities for which you receive compensation as long as the activities are related to improving your effectiveness as an educator (see question 1).

4. Can I earn PDPs by attending required trainings (e.g., blood-borne pathogens, suicide prevention, bullying prevention, child abuse awareness training, TN Promise mentor training) for PDPs?

While these are important activities, in most cases they are not directly related to educator effectiveness and therefore **do not** qualify for PDPs.

5. Can I earn PDPs while attending activities that are part of my required 30 hours of in-service per contract year?

Yes. If the topic of the in-service is related to improving educator effectiveness and if approved by your district, these in-service hours may be used for PDPs.

However, PDPs for such activities may be awarded for **school services personnel** (e.g., school counselor, social worker or psychologist), provided the district determines participation in these learning activities will enhance the educator's effectiveness based on current job duties.

6. Can I receive PDPs for presenting at a conference or other learning event?

No. Time spent presenting at a conference, at school or district in-services, or other learning events cannot be used to earn PDPs.

7. Can I receive PDPs for micro-credentials?

Yes. Educators can receive PDPs for micro-credentials as long as the PDPs are earned through a state-approved [micro-credentials](#) provider (i.e., Digital Promise, Teaching Matters). Micro-credentials documentation must be issued by the state-approved micro-credentials provider.

Tracking PDPs

8. How do I submit PDPs into TNCompass?

Educators submit their own PDPs into [TNCompass](#). Instructions are located [here](#). PDPs can be entered into TNCompass at any time, but must be submitted prior to the expiration date of the license.

9. How do I enter PDPs earned from evaluation scores?

PDPs earned from evaluation scores will be automatically issued in TNCompass once your level of overall effectiveness (LOE) is finalized. Sometimes this does not happen until the fall after the completed school year, so educators whose license will expire on Aug. 31 should not count on their last year of evaluation scores for PDPs to renew or advance a license. PDPs from evaluation scores must be present in TNCompass to be accepted.

10. I work in a Tennessee public school. Who approves my PDPs?

PDPs submitted by educators currently staffed in TNCompass will have their PDPs approved by one of the district's designees for approving PDPs. Districts may have their own guidelines regarding submitting PDPs and documentation in TNCompass. Please check with your district staff to see if they provide any specific PDP guidelines for district educators.

Using PDPs for Licensure

11. How may PDPs do I need to advance to a professional license?

To advance to a professional license, educators must have

- [three years of acceptable experience](#), and
- one of the following:
 - a recommendation of the director of schools **or**
 - 30 PDPs earned during the validity period of the license.

Educators may apply to advance the license as soon as requirements are met.

12. How many PDPs do I need to renew a professional license?

To renew a professional license, educators must submit 60 acceptable PDPs earned during the validity period of their license.

13. I am a retired Tennessee educator who wants to keep their license current. Who approves the PDPs I submit for my license renewal?

Educators who are not currently staffed in a Tennessee public school but wish to maintain an active license must still attain the appropriate number of PDPs. The educator must submit their PDPs and related documentation directly into TNCompass. The department will review and approve these PDPs.

14. I am a teacher currently working in a Tennessee charter or private school that does not use a state-approved evaluation model. Who approves the PDPs I submit for my license renewal?

Educators who are currently teaching in a private or charter school that does not use a state-approved evaluation model submit their PDPs and related documentation directly into TNCompass. The department will review and approve these PDPs.

15. What can I use as documentation for my PDPs?

Different PDPs require different documentation. Please see table on page 1, under **Earning PDPs**, for a complete listing of required documentation.

16. I am currently working in a TASL-mandated position and want to keep my teacher or school services personnel license active. Do I have to submit 60 PDPs to do this?

Administrators in a TASL-mandated positions or serving as directors of schools may use this experience in lieu of submitting PDPs to renew their professional teaching or school services personnel license. When submitting the application in TNCompass, educators should indicate in the *Submission Notes* section that they are serving in a TASL-mandated position.

17. I currently hold an active administrator license, but I am not in a TASL-mandated position. What do I need to do to keep my teaching or school services personnel license active?

Educators with an active administrator license who are not in a TASL-mandated position must submit 60 PDPs to renew their professional teaching or school services personnel license.

18. Who do I contact for more information?

For more information or with questions, contact Educator.Licensure@tn.gov or call (615) 532-4885.