

I-95 Recertification System

➤ What is it?

The I-95 Consortium has a system in place through which its administrators develop an action plan, choose a support/review team, and complete the goals of the plan. A steering committee with representation from the six member districts oversees the process and ultimately makes a recommendation to the Division of Certification to either renew or non-renew (subject to appeal.) Signature of the Re-certification chair only indicates that the person has completed the action plan. It does not guarantee certification. (That decision is a State function, i.e., the legal requirement of 30 hours beyond a master's degree for a superintendent's certificate might not be tied into an action plan.)

➤ How to proceed:

At the beginning of each school year administrators who are three years away from their re-certification date will be notified through the Steering Committee of the need to begin to formulate an action plan. (Administrators who are new to the district will be contacted directly by the district representative to the committee to see where each one is in the re-certification cycle.) **It is the individual's responsibility to initiate the process of choosing a review team, acquiring the necessary approval and signatures from them, developing a plan, and submitting it for approval.**

As a practical matter, administrators who receive re-certification from the Division of Certification may want to develop a new plan before they draw within three years of the next renewal cycle. This might make sense given that any professional development done (course work etc.) before a plan is approved may or may not count toward that plan. (The committee reserves the right to limit the time frame for acceptable activities.)

➤ The action plan:

An action plan can be thought of as a stretch beyond what is expected in an administrator's daily job responsibilities. It should reflect an intent for professional growth in an area that the administrator finds him or herself needing renewal, experience or education. As measured against the customary 6 credit hour recertification standard, it can be expected to take about 90 clock hours to meet the goals of the plan.

Degree credit course work does count, but many other professional opportunities can be included. Workshops, conferences, consulting, presentations and their applications can all serve as activities that are directed toward the goals.

Remember: the action plan forms the basis upon which decisions about re-certification will be made. According to law, the plan **must** include sections addressing:

- 1) A comprehensive needs assessment of candidate's strengths and weaknesses in the following knowledge areas:
 - a. Community relations;
 - b. School finance and budget;
 - c. Supervision and evaluation of personnel;
 - d. Federal and state civil rights and education laws;
 - e. Organizational theory and planning;
 - f. Educational leadership
 - g. Educational philosophy and theory;
 - h. Effective instruction;
 - i. Curriculum development;
 - j. Staff development;
 - k. Teaching the exceptional student in the regular classroom; and
 - l. Knowledge of the learner and the learning process.
- 2) A description of the candidate's goals and the activities leading to attainment of those goals;
- 3) A description of how improvement activities will be evaluated in the plan; and
- 4) The specific routes to improvement to be followed within the term of the certificate .

Attached to this document is an example of a plan developed according to the format which the I-95 consortium has adopted for use. It is cited as an example because it follows the suggested form, is specific in its activities, timeline, resources, and evaluation plan, and reflects an integrated, comprehensive plan for professional improvement.

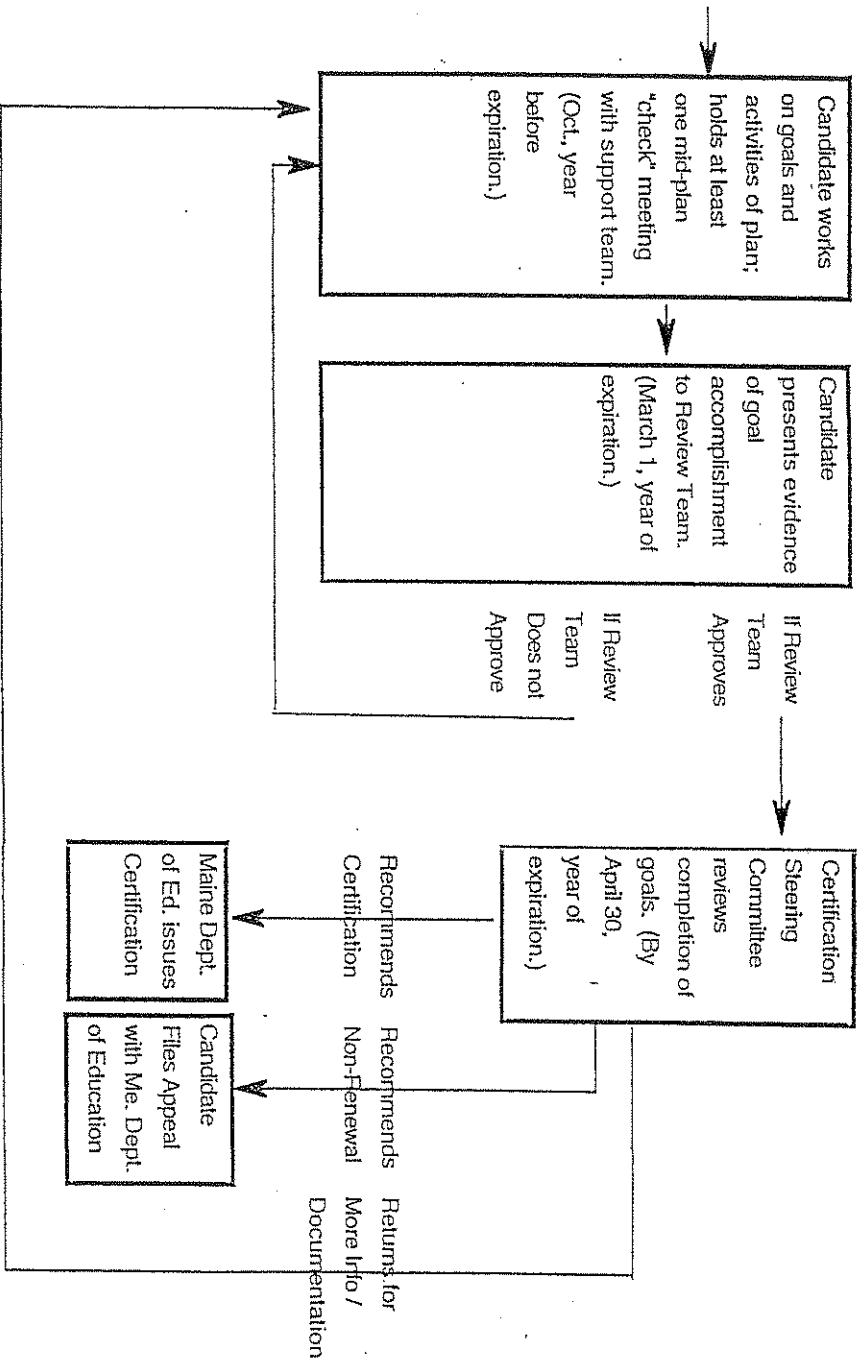
➤ **The review team:**

Each administrator is urged to think carefully about the composition of his/her review team and choose professionals who can be both encouraging and critical reviewers of the plan and the process. There are some criteria in place for the selection of the team which are designed to provide the candidate with a broad based group of individuals who bring different perspectives but who do not function in supervisory capacities.

The team will consist of at least three members with one representing the role of the candidate, one representing the administrative unit, and one member at large. At least one of the members must be from outside the candidate's district. The phrase "representing the role of the candidate" means one who has experience or is currently functioning in that role, not just certified for that position.

This group must read the initial draft of an action plan and approve it by affixing their signatures to the cover letter submitted to the Steering Committee. Best practice would have the group receive copies of the draft plan and then meet later as a team with the applicant to discuss it. There may be several meetings with the candidate along the way either as individuals or in total to review the candidate's progress and provide support. At the end of the action plan timeline, team members will approve the successful completion of the plan and may be asked to provide a written description of the level of involvement each has had in seeing the plan through to full implementation.

System Activities and Timeline for Recertification Candidates.



Competency Areas

1. *COMMUNITY RELATIONS*

Informs, invites, and involves the community in a collaborative manner with goal setting and implementation of the school system policies and practices. Maintains communications through contact with key persons and by attending and participating in various civic groups and organizations.

2. *SCHOOL FINANCE AND BUDGETING*

Develops and prepares a school or system budget and manages allocation of resources to achieve goals and objectives of the school system. Maintains management control of expenditures, determines tradeoffs, and develops new sources of financing to respond to contingencies.

3. *SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF PERSONNEL*

Supervises and evaluates the effectiveness of personnel responsible for the delivery of the school program. Analyzes duties, delegates authority, and provides feedback and training to improve performance of personnel.

4. *FEDERAL AND STATE CIVIL RIGHTS AND EDUCATION LAWS*

Develops and implements policies and procedures which are consistent with civil rights and education laws and reviews and monitors school or system policies and actions to ensure that implementation is consistent with laws.

5. *ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING*

Plans for and schedules educational activities and the use of staff and other resources to accomplish organizational goals.

6. *EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP*

Plans and implements an instructional management system which is consistent with current educational philosophy and learning theory and participates in program development and implementation. Maintains a presence in the school and classroom and influences teachers and staff to enhance the effectiveness of the educational process.

7. *EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY*

Translates educational philosophy and theory into plans and actions for implementation in program development, staff development, and creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and goal accomplishment.

8. *EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION*

Guides and assists personnel in planning and implementing instructional strategies that match the curriculum and student learning needs. Visits classrooms to observe and identify training and development activities to improve instruction.

9. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Works with staff to identify skills or learning objectives which are appropriate to the student body and works with staff and provides guidance in the development of the curriculum consistent with the available resources of time, money, materials and personnel.

10. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Guides, supports, and encourages personnel to participate in personal and professional activities to enhance their competency to conduct educational and staff functions. Arranges for training and development activities for programs and encourages and facilitates participation.

11. TEACHING THE EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT

Identifies and defines requirements and needs of exceptional students and arranges for the development of the appropriate systems and in the acquisition of the resources.

12. THE LEARNER AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

Participates in and guides development and teaching efforts to enhance responsiveness to student needs and accommodate the learning process.

13. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Understands and implements regulations concerning employment practices.

Needs Assessment

Provide an overview of the problem identification/needs assessment process you used to arrive at your plan. Indicate who was involved in that process and what information was considered; e.g. performance appraisal, self-assessment, reflective interviews, competency lists, literature review. Select a limited number of needs (2 - 4) that you can address through study or improvement activities over the next eighteen months to three years. Note that depth rather than breadth of improvement is encouraged. If there are competencies or knowledge areas required by law that you must address to be recertified/renewed, these are your priorities for development.

Through the evaluation process in my district I have identified one area that I need to develop more thoroughly and through experience over the past two years, I have decided upon two others. These goals were chosen for their practicality and because each has stymied me to some degree as I try to understand the implications of special education system that is increasingly hard to manage. Specifically:

Staff development: I have taught or co-taught the "mainstreaming" course for teachers 5 times in the 7 years that I have been director here. Each time I am more struck by the lack of knowledge about special education that I see but I am also amazed by the positive way that the information is received. Not that the news is necessarily that which the participants want to hear or even agree with, but that they are understanding what it all means for public education. In the summer-fall 1993 course, there were more out of district participants than ever before and the interactions of the group were the most productive I had observed. I could not help but think that increased understanding across districts helps those within each district gain some perspective about how one's school fits uniquely and yet universally on the continuum.

I am in the process of refining the curriculum of the administrator's exceptionality course that I developed so that it is relevant for school superintendents, the group I am currently teaching. This is particularly challenging given that they are farther removed from the front line daily administrative issues that confront building level administrators (PET meetings, classroom issues, etc.) but more attuned to the legal and fiscal issues that surround special education.

Educational Leadership: During my conversations, both formal and informal, with the superintendent of schools, I have been able to articulate my concern about merging best practice with status quo around special education. With his encouragement I am training the other administrators in my district in how to understand and implement the framework of Section 504 and am anticipating broadening the training to include the staff.

I have also discovered through this process and the supervision process that is ongoing with my staff that special educators are also ill equipped both in time and resources to keep up with emerging trends, current legal decisions, and changing regulations. If it's a full time job for me, how can they be expected to pick it up on the side? I need to create ways in which they can learn and still enjoy the challenges of special education.

Behavior Management: This is the area I have chosen based on my needs to do something about it. I find that in my contact with teachers, this is the arena in which they feel least confident, least knowledgeable, least comfortable, and least supported by special education.

Pre-school Children with Disabilities: In an educational environment where early intervention has been supported, I need to make sure that we are indeed being wise both in the programming and the funding for the pre-school program. I will look to federal, state, and regional programs and to this community to develop a long range plan for the program.

The Administrator's Working Context

Describe your present position and state the purpose for this action plan. Consider your responsibilities relative to building(s), staff, programs, students, and the community. Limit your remarks to this page and highlight those areas which will set the stage for your personal development plan.

I am currently the director of special services in a district in Maine. As such I have responsibilities for developing and implementing the programs that meet the identified needs of students with disabilities according to the state and federal mandates and supervising the staff that is necessary to deliver these services. There are 1985 students attending the district's six schools (including a K-6 island school accessible by ferry). The district also runs a pre-school program for children with disabilities in one of the mainland elementary schools.

Although not mandated by law to fall to the schools, the education of youngsters with disabilities aged 3-5 has major implications for public education. The program in my district has been in place for more than 20 years but has not evolved in concert with the philosophy regarding the **pre-school handicapped** population. It is has been largely self-contained and supported by local monies after the federal seed money expired. It is also sacred in the community. I need to increase my level of involvement in the statewide effort and translate that back into my district in ways that are forward looking and fiscally creative.

The lightning rod notion of "inclusion" and the most recent court cases in support of it have helped to create a bizarre phenomenon in public schools. In some incidences, children who appear to be able to receive no educational benefit other than proximity to their peers are present in classrooms while others who are diagnosed as suffering from an often invisible Attention Deficit Disorder are having their classrooms and instruction modified almost beyond recognition. Deciding whether or not to resuscitate is at one end of the IEP continuum while providing extended test time is at the other. Somewhere in the middle of all this are the specialists and the classroom teachers struggling to find a workable and realistic common ground while complying with state and federal mandates. Into the middle of the special education muddy waters has fallen the heretofore largely ignored Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The education of children with disabilities is seen as more complex than ever.

In this working context I am proposing to concentrate on **staff development** around the issues cited in the previous paragraphs in a way that includes the special and regular education staff in my district and in others. I am also interested in concentrating on the area of **educational leadership** in my district because I am at a professional impasse (or perhaps it is more internal than that) where I see where I want the programs to move but I am not sure that the community and staff want the same. How do I resolve this issue if not by learning about what kind of a leader I need to be to figure this out?

One of the most glaring arenas of conflict between inclusion and exclusion has to do with managing the **behavior of students** in the classrooms. As much as professionals are willing to find ways to educate those difficult-to-teach students, it is more often the deviant behavior that drives a teacher to refer for "outside help". I am interested in looking at ways to help describe and define effective classrooms not from a managing *them* standpoint but from a managing *me* perspective; that is, what can I add to my repertoire to reach them so that I can teach them. Prior to becoming an administrator, I worked with students with behavioral impairments, so I am not without opinion about how to serve this population.

Action Plan for Special Education Director

Needs	Goals Expected Outcomes	Activities	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation Plan
Need to keep district staff current on the education of students with disabilities	(1) Staff and administrators will understand Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	<p>(1a) Establish set of forms and notices for local use</p> <p>(1b) Train administrators about the procedures and policies</p> <p>(1c) Present workshops to regular and special education staff</p> <p>(1d) Implement 504 referrals from special education process</p>	<p>Fall 1993</p> <p>Winter 1993-1994</p> <p>Spring 1994</p> <p>Fall-Winter 1994-1995</p> <p>School year 1994-1995</p>	<p>"Student Access" A Resource Guide for Educators' Section 504 (Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc.)</p> <p>Drummond Woodsum Plimpton and MacMahon Section 504/ADAC compliance Package (1993)</p> <p>Reed Martin video on Section 504</p> <p>Consultation with Eric Herlian</p>	<p>(1a) There will be a completed packet</p> <p>(1b and 1c) The district will have a working knowledge of the implications of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act</p> <p>(1d) PET process will be integrated into 504 process</p>
(2) Special education staff will have opportunities to read and discuss timely issues		<p>(2a) A series of PET Polluck suppers will be scheduled with topics that are jointly selected by staff and myself</p> <p>(2b) A special education resource library of special education journals, periodicals, hearing decisions, parent newsletters etc. will be developed in the special education office</p>	<p>beginning in Spring of 1994</p> <p>School year 1994-1995</p>	<p>Maine hearing officer decisions</p> <p><i>The Special Educator</i></p> <p><i>Special Education Law Update</i></p> <p>Eric Herlian's commentaries on the Maine Special Education Regulations</p> <p>ERIC search</p>	<p>(2a) Staff will be conversant with the practical and legal issues of inclusion, FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) and LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)</p>
(3) The Board of Directors will acquire an understanding of the special education framework		<p>(3) I will present relevant issues to the board at least twice yearly</p>	<p>Ongoing 1993-1995</p>		<p>Information will be distributed and discussed</p>
Need to revise the administrators' mainstream recertification course to meet the needs of superintendents/participants	<p>(4) The course content will be relevant and practical for practicing school superintendents</p>	<p>(4a) Conduct needs assessment</p> <p>(4b) Update material</p>	<p>Fall/Winter 1993-1994</p>	<p>Administrators course material</p>	<p>The course will be evaluated by the participants</p>

Action Plan for Special Education Director

Needs	Goals Expected Outcomes	Activities	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation Plan
<p>Teachers in this district and others feel ill equipped to manage inappropriate or acting out behavior in the classroom and to understand when a student qualifies for special education services as a student with a behavioral disability</p>	<p>There will be a workshop presentation developed around managing behavior in the classroom</p> <p>There will be an increased awareness of the differences between irritant and deviant behavior</p> <p>I will be more able to delineate for staff the identification criteria for behavioral impairment</p>	<p>Read and research literature around effective classroom management</p> <p>Prepare and present the workshop at least two times</p> <p>Review case law and evolving federal definitions</p> <p>Prepare a document to clarify the definition of Seriously Emotionally Disturbed through a case study approach</p>	<p>1993-1994</p> <p>1993-1995</p> <p>1993-1995</p> <p>1995-1996</p>	<p>USM Library CEC literature Personal library</p> <p>Behavior Strategist Administrators in the area</p> <p>Special education journals Federal regulations Office of Special Education Programs</p>	<p>A bibliography will be prepared</p> <p>Packet will be done and presentations will be documented</p> <p>Draft notes will be available</p> <p>Document will be shared</p>

Action Plan for Special Education Director

Needs	Goals Expected Outcomes	Activities	Timeline	Resources	Evaluation Plan
<p>The pre-school program needs to fit into a more inclusive model of delivering FAPE</p>	<p>The preschool program will change to meet the regulatory demands and the needs of a population of children with severe disabilities</p> <p>The program will be more integrated into the public school setting</p>	<p>Meet with pre-school and elementary staff to discuss program needs</p> <p>Consult with other directors who have pre-school programs</p> <p>Discuss the process of developing a seamless system for receiving pre-school students identified as disabled</p> <p>Accept nomination to the CDS Co-Step Board of Directors for two year term</p> <p>Redesign the pre-school program to be more consistent with regulations</p>	<p>1993-1994</p> <p>1993-1994</p> <p>Spring/Summer 1994</p> <p>1993-1995</p> <p>1994-1995</p>	<p>MSAD #51 staff</p> <p>Cumberland County Directors</p> <p>Informational Letter #36 re CDS/Public School Transition</p> <p>Chapter 180 "FAPE services Rule"</p>	<p>Meeting minutes will be maintained</p> <p>Discussion held and notes kept</p> <p>Information shared with staff. Document discussion and results</p> <p>Minutes of Board meetings</p> <p>Staff will reach consensus about the design of the program to be implemented</p> <p>Community shared information through newsletters and public notices will document the philosophy of the program.</p>

I-95 Administrator Support System Activities and Timeline for Recertification Candidates.

