



PENNSYLVANIA

CERTIFICATION

According to its Title II report, the state of Pennsylvania certifies teachers using Type A and Type B certificates. The state has 93 colleges and universities that offer Pennsylvania Department of Education approved programs in teacher education. Candidates must be recommended by their institution to be considered for certification. Candidates who have been recommended have met the requirements of their approved preparation program, have achieved qualifying scores on the appropriate Praxis examinations, and have met other requirements set by the State Board of Education. Approved programs have established general and subject-specific guidelines and do not specify a particular number of credits. By the 2003–04 school year, candidates must have a 3.0 GPA in the academic area in which they plan to teach. Academic content courses for professional educators shall include all required course work for academic majors in that field.

Elementary Certification

Elementary teaching candidates must take courses that prepare them to meet the needs of elementary students. These courses must enable teachers to engage in instruction in citizenship education in accordance with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, including economics, communication, transportation, industrialization, technology and agriculture, geography including location, place, region, human and environmental interaction, world, national, state, and local history, political science, government, social organizations, and civic responsibilities.

Middle-Level Certification

At this time there is no separate certification for middle school teachers. Elementary certification covers grades K–8 and secondary certification covers grades 6–12. Whether an elementary or secondary teacher gets hired for a middle school job is left to the discretion of school administrators.

Secondary Certification

Candidates pursuing secondary licensure must complete course work that is the same as that of a major in an academic content course with accompanying electives. The major must be in history, geography, civics and government, or economics, and significant course work must be taken in the three remaining areas. The candidate should also take course work in the behavior sciences that will enable him/her to pass the certification exam. The program should enable teachers to teach the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for students in grades 7–12. The discipline of history shall include:

- ❖ the study of human experiences including important events;
- ❖ interactions of culture, race and ideas, and the nature of prejudice;
- ❖ change and continuity in political systems;
- ❖ effects of technology;
- ❖ importance of global-international perspectives; and
- ❖ the integration of geography, economics, and civics studies on major developments in the history of the Commonwealth, the United States, and the world.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

Program Guidelines for teachers have three sections: knowing the content, performances, and professionalism. The content required is that referred to in the above section on certification.

Standards for Students

The state of Pennsylvania has academic standards in civics and government, economics, geography, and history. The proposed history standards were published on February 16, 2002, and followed by a 30-day public comment period. In May the State Board Committee on Academic Standards reviewed the comments and on July 18, 2002, approved the final academic standards. Regulatory approval must now be granted. Once approval occurs, the standards will become effective and will be published in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*.

According to the introduction provided by the state, the Academic Standards for History in Pennsylvania are designed to blend historical thinking with historical understanding. The standards describe what students should know and be able to do in four areas:

- ❖ historical analysis and skills development;
- ❖ Pennsylvania history;
- ❖ United States history; and
- ❖ world history.

Expectations are outlined at four grade levels: grade 3, grade 6, grade 9, and grade 12. Four standard statements guide the categories of Pennsylvania history, U.S. history, and world history.

- ❖ Political and Cultural Contributions of Individuals and Groups
- ❖ Primary Documents, Material Artifacts, and Historical Places
- ❖ How Continuity and Change Has Influenced History
- ❖ Conflict and Cooperation among Social Groups and Organizations

A chart provides an overview with accompanying standard statements and descriptors pertaining to these four categories at the beginning of the document. At each of the benchmark grade levels, there are four standard statements that reflect these categories under each of the four areas bulleted above. Descriptors follow under the categorical statements.

Two general chronologies are provided for Pennsylvania and United States history and world history.

- ❖ Pennsylvania and U.S. History
 1. Grades 1–3: Beginnings to Present
 2. Grades 4–6: Beginnings to 1824
 3. Grades 7–9: 1787 to 1914
 4. Grades 10–12: 1890 to Present
- ❖ World History
 1. Grades 1–3: Beginnings to Present
 2. Grades 4–6: Beginnings to Present
 3. Grades 7–9: Beginnings to 1500
 4. Grades 10–12: 1450 to Present

The state emphasizes that social studies/citizenship education should include the four sets of standards (civics and government, economics, geography, and history) as an entire entity when developing curriculum scope and sequence.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

Each school district specifies its own requirements for graduation.

Exit Exam

Students in Pennsylvania must demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics on either the state assessments or a local assessment aligned with the standards in order to graduate from high school. It should be noted that the exam is not considered a graduation requirement, but students must demonstrate proficiency. No exam in history/social studies/citizenship education has been located.

ASSESSMENT

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a standards based criterion-referenced test administered annually. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 take the PSSA in reading and math, and students in grades 6, 9 and 11 take the PSSA in writing. Although benchmarks exist in the standards at grades 3, 6, 9, and 12, no evidence of assessment in social studies has been found.

