

The Advocacy Ministry Team (AMT) of the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) is given the task of providing ways for Presbyteries and Synods to provide for the nurture, care and support of those people called to the ministry of education. The following has been prepared by AMT for distribution to Presbyteries in the near future.

The Care and Nurturing of Certified Christian Educators in Your Presbytery

BOOK OF ORDER: G-2.1103 Christian Educators

a. Skills and Training

Certified Christian educators are persons certified and called to service in the ministry of education in congregations or councils. They shall have skills and training in biblical interpretation, Reformed theology, worship and sacraments, human development, religious educational theory and practice, and the polity, programs, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

b. Presbytery Responsibility

The presbytery shall establish minimum requirements for compensation and benefits for Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators and shall provide access to the area of presbytery that oversees ministry (G-3.0307). During their term of service in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery, Certified Christian Educators are entitled to the privilege of the floor with voice only at all presbytery meetings, and in the case of Certified Christian Educators who are ruling elders, the privilege of voice and vote at all its meetings.

The Advocacy Ministry Team has compiled the following suggestions for this task and offers them as guidelines and possibilities to consider as you evaluate your Presbytery Policies relating to the role of Certified Christian Educators in your Presbytery.

CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS:

- should be included in all compensation standards equal to that of an Associate Pastor, including sabbaticals and continuing education – money and time, and book allowance.
- should be granted the right of voice and vote at all Presbytery meetings, if a Ruling Elder and/or as a retired volunteer.
- should be recognized by the Presbytery at a stated Presbytery meeting for achieving their certification and at their retirement by thanking them for their service to the Church of Jesus Christ.
- should be granted a Sabbatical period of three months following the seventh year, if they have been in a position at a church for seven years.
- should retain their status with all pertaining rights and privileges and support systems regardless of the different titles of the job or the place of service to the church (for instance: Parish, Camp, Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly) or upon retirement just as those ordained to the Word and Sacrament always retain their status as Reverend.

CONGREGATIONS AND SESSIONS:

- should be encouraged to notify the Commission on Ministry (COM) when considering dissolving the relationship with a certified Christian Educator, notifying COM before any such dissolution takes place.
- should consider supporting the work of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators through encouraging attendance at its annual conference and becoming members. APCE not only supports those serving as Educators (Certified and Non-certified) but the programs and curriculum for churches.
- should be encouraged to consider ordaining their Certified Christian Educators as Ruling Elders to help them in their service to the church at large (may need to become members first).
- should have Certified Educators eulogized at a meeting of the Presbytery

PRESBYTERIES:

- should encourage volunteers within the Presbytery who demonstrate gifts of education to seek out further education and requirements for certification through available programs.
- should provide the Committee on Ministry with policies for the care of the Educator in the event of a separation from the congregation they have been serving, including a standard for compensation packages equal to that of an Associate Pastor.
- through the Committee on Ministry, should meet with Certified Educators new to the presbytery, when they are certified and also provide a Eulogy at their deaths (as they would for clergy within the bounds).
- should recognize Educators who are taking new positions and should be recognized and welcomed at a Presbytery meeting.
- should provide guidance, support and assistance for churches seeking to call a staff person ministering with children, youth, adults or as a generalist within the field of Christian Education.
- should provide all churches with information on the requirements that Certified Christian Educators have met to receive their certification and support the calling of those who are fully trained in our Reformed tradition and Presbyterian polity. The Committee on Ministry should work with churches to help discern if the job description they are seeking is best filled by an Associate Pastor or a Certified Christian Educator.
- Certification requirements meet the standards for Certified Ruling Elders or Lay Pastors in most presbyteries, therefore, retired and/or unemployed Certified Christian Educators should be considered for ordination as Commissioned Ruling Elders or Lay Pastors in vacant churches.

RESOURCES:

- An excellent resource for Presbytery, COM and Congregations is the [Compensation Handbook for Church Staff](#) by Richard R. Hammar, published by Church Law & Tax.
- The Advocacy Ministry Committee of APCE, Renda Brinson, moderator, rendab1234@gmail.com.
- The Educator Certification Committee of General Assembly, Martha Miller, staff, martha.miller@pcusa.org.
- Book of Order of the PCUSA, G-2.11, Certified Church Service (see above).