

The Care and Nurturing of Certified Christian Educators in Your Presbytery

APCE Advocacy Ministry Team

The Advocacy Ministry Team (AMT) of the Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators (APCE) is given the task of providing ways for Congregations and Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods to provide for the nurture, care and support of those people called to the ministry of education. We have compiled expectations for this task and offer the following as guidelines to evaluate your current policies as they specifically relate to the role 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.

G-3.0305 Minutes and Records

Minutes and other official records of the presbytery are the property of the presbytery, and are subject to the review specified in G-3.0108. The stated clerk is responsible for the preservation of the presbytery's minutes and records. These records shall include the rolls of the presbytery's membership and registers of all Certified Christian Educators, Certified Associate Christian Educators, and ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service.

PRESBYTERIES:

- Encourage volunteers within the Presbytery who demonstrate gifts of education to seek out further education and training through available programs, such as Opening Doors to Discipleship and entering the certification process.

- Establish required minimum requirements (G-2.1103b) for compensation and benefits for Certified Educators and consider equating these minimums to that of an associate pastor. Presbyteries can encourage congregations to consider providing a sabbatical period for certified Christian educators who have served in a position for seven years.
- G-3.0305 provides certified Christian educators access to the area of the presbytery that oversees ministry. For example, Central Florida Presbytery has developed the following policy: *The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommends that the Committee on Preparation for Ministry take under its care those educators in Central Florida Presbytery who are seeking certification as Christian Educators. The care provided will include: providing a committee liaison; conducting annual consultations; and appointing a CPM representative to serve on the educator's Reference Group (CFP 12-06-11)*
- Provide the committee or area which oversees ministry with policies for the care of the Educator in the event of a separation from the congregation they have been serving. Consider including a standard for compensation packages equal to that of an associate pastor.
- Identify your approved Certification Advisor and inform the Educator Certification Committee of General Assembly.
- G-3.0305 ensures that the presbytery records shall include registers of all certified Christian educators. It would be appropriate for presbyteries to recognize certified Christian educators who are beginning new positions and those who are retiring from ministry at a meeting of presbytery. You might also consider providing a eulogy at their deaths.
- G-2.1103b assures certified Christian educators the right to voice on the floor of presbytery during their term of service, and vote in the case of certified Christian educators who are also ruling elders. Make sure that presbytery systems are prepared for the participation of certified Christian educators.
- Provide guidance, support and assistance for churches seeking to employ a staff person who will be called to serve in areas of Christian formation.
- Encourage congregations to employ those who have knowledge of Reformed theology and Presbyterian polity.
- Assist churches in determining whether a position would be best served by an associate pastor or church educator. Persons serving in areas of Christian formation should be encouraged by their session and presbytery to meet, or be prepared to meet, the educator certification requirements (G-2.1101), and this may include providing congregations with information on the certification process and what it entails.
- Compare standards for ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service and whether the requirements for certified Christian educators may also satisfy this training. Unemployed or retired certified Christian educators who are also ruling elders may be able to serve in this role.
- Recognize educators' years of service. For example, 10, 20, 30 year increments, or as done with ordained clergy at Presbytery meetings.

CONGREGATIONS AND SESSIONS:

- When considering compensation packages, check the minimum standards policies of the Presbytery, for all potential allowances (housing, continuing education, sabbaticals, books, retirement, etc.). For more information on compensation please check the *Suggested Compensation Guidelines* for educators <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/suggested-compensation-guidelines-establishing-edu/>.
- Notify the Presbytery when considering dissolving the relationship with a certified Christian Educator, before any such dissolution takes place.
- Support the ministry of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) by encouraging attendance at its annual conference and becoming members. In return, APCE not only supports those serving as educators (certified and Non-certified) but the programs and curriculum for churches.
- Affirm the ministry of certified Christian educators to the larger church by electing them as ruling elders (for example, completing an unexpired term).
- Encourage certified Christian educators be eulogized at a meeting of the Presbytery upon their deaths commensurate with the policy for clergy.

CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS:

- Check on all compensation standards set by the presbytery. Does it equal that of an Associate Pastor, including sabbaticals and continuing education – money and time, and book allowance?
- Speak with Stated Clerk and/or General Presbyter to make sure you are granted the right of voice and vote at all Presbytery meetings, if you are a Ruling Elder and check on employment requirements.
- When certification is achieved, check with the Presbytery Stated Clerk to be recognized at a stated Presbytery meeting and inquire of presbytery policy upon for recognition at retirement.

RESOURCES:

- An excellent resource for Presbytery and Congregations is the [2018 Compensation Handbook for Church Staff](#) by Richard R. Hammer (published by Church Law & Tax).
- The Association of Presbyterian Church Educators, www.apcenet.org.
- The Advocacy Ministry Team 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 PSCUSA, G-2.11, Certified Church Service (see above) and G-3.0305, Minutes and Records.