

As administrator of Florida's nation leading legal certification program, the Board of Legal Specialization & Education (BLSE), meets frequently to consider improvements to our program to enhance the experience of Florida's board certified lawyers. We provide the following report to bring you up-to-date on issues that the BLSE reviewed at its April 20, 2018 meeting.

I. APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

a. BLSE approved 747 applications for certification and recertification that were recommended by the area certification committees. We congratulate all who achieved or maintained their certification status!!

b. BLSE approved two requests from certified lawyers who needed additional time to obtain the necessary CLE credits.

c. Rule 6-7 of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar established "Inactive Status" for certified lawyers who are not engaged in the practice of law. This status replaces the "emeritus rule." BLSE approved the application forms and process for determining the eligibility of lawyers applying for Inactive Status.

II. REVIEW OF CERTIFICATION AREAS

a. The Board Certified Juvenile Law Area Committee proposed amendments to the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar to formalize the distinction between lawyers who practice juvenile law in the dependency area and lawyers who practice juvenile law in the delinquency area. BLSE reviewed and approved the proposed amendments.

b. The State and Federal Government and Administrative Law area has a relatively small number of certified lawyers. BLSE considered sun setting this area and replacing it with a new certification area focusing on Florida Government and Administrative Practice. The lawyers who practice in this area will receive a survey to gauge interest in the suggestion. The BLSE appreciates any suggestions or comments.

c. Similarly, the Antitrust and Trade Regulation area has very few lawyers. BLSE discussed how to increase the number of certified lawyers. The chair of the area committee suggested that the standards should be amended to include consumer protection law to attract more lawyers. The BLSE will reach out to certified lawyers and potential applicants in this area to evaluate the suggestion.

d. The area committee for Condominium and Planned Development certification requested that its exam cycle be changed from the first cycle in March to the second cycle in May. The BLSE considered and will continue to discuss that request.

e. The BLSE discussed and approved the policies for the International Litigation and Arbitration committee and the establishment of an exam cycle for this new area.

III. RULES AND POLICIES

a. BLSE discussed and approved changes to policies regarding the manner and timing of notice to applicants who have filed a grade review petition.

b. The Business Litigation area proposed an amendment to the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar to allow the substitution of an advanced trial advocacy course for the jury trial requirement. BLSE approved that amendment.

c. BLSE discussed, and will continue to consider, the revision of The Florida Bar's advertising rule with respect to a lawyer's authorization to advertise expertise in a practice area when the lawyer is not board certified.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

a. BLSE approved the annual contracts with the BLSE's counsel and BLSE's examination consultant.

b. BLSE, in executive session, confidentially considered pending recommendations for denial of certification or recertification.

c. BLSE discussed creating a program in cooperation with The Florida Bar Foundation in which certified lawyers can be contacted by a legal aid organization seeking consultation, on a pro bono basis, in the certified lawyer's area of expertise. The program is tentatively called "Certified Lawyers on Call," or "CLOC."

d. BLSE reviewed the content of a proposed survey to all lawyers to regarding the certification program.

e. BLSE reviewed The Florida Bar's website and suggested changes to improve the website by creating better links to locate certified lawyers.

V. UPCOMING EVENTS

a. **THE BLSE FORUM** --- the BLSE forum will take place on June 14th from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m., during the 2018 Annual Florida Bar Convention. All certification committee members are invited to attend.

b. **BOARD CERTIFIED LAWYERS ANNUAL RECEPTION.** The annual Reception for Board Certified Lawyers will be held at 6:00 p.m. on June 14, 2018. Justice Ricky Polston will present the annual Board Certified Lawyer of the Year Award and the annual Excellence in the Promotion of Certification Award. BLSE will also recognize lawyers who have maintained the distinction of board certification for 30 years.

ALL CERTIFIED LAWYERS SHOULD PLAN TO ATTEND!!