



Redesigning the Pathway to Teaching: Educator Licensing in Tennessee

The Tennessee Department of Education issues and renews educator licenses to ensure that teachers meet minimum standards of practice. The department strives to expand students' access to effective educators.

Current licensure policy and process

- Professional teaching licenses are renewed for 10 years without regard to teacher effectiveness. Every year, Tennessee renews about 350 10-year licenses for teachers who earned a 1 on TVAAS, the lowest possible score on the state's student growth measure. During the span of that license, these teachers could collectively instruct nearly 100,000 students.
- Teacher licensing is not tied to teacher performance.
- There are currently more than 20 types of educator licenses.
- Obtaining or renewing a license is often a lengthy and complicated process.

Proposed changes to teacher licensure

- Streamline license types creating a single practitioner license for nearly all pathways
- Tie advancement and renewal to performance
- Adopt incremental increases in Praxis scores over the next 10 years
- Reduce duration of license

Initial Practitioner License

A teacher must hold a bachelor's degree, be enrolled in or have completed an approved preparation program and pass required content assessments. This license will be valid for three years.

Advancement to Professional License

A teacher must earn a 2 or better on overall evaluation and individual growth scores for two of three years. New teachers will have two chances to advance—at year three and year six.

Renewal of Professional License

License renewal will be shortened from 10 to six years. Teachers who earn a 2 or better on overall evaluation and individual growth scores for two of the three most recent years will be automatically renewed. If requirements are not met, the license will be extended for one additional year and placed on review status. If requirements are not met after review year, a teacher's license is non-renewed.

Forecasting Impact

- It is estimated that approximately 100-200 teacher licenses will not be renewed each year.
- It is estimated that 95 percent of licenses will be advanced or renewed automatically.

Proposed Timeline

- These proposed changes would take effect July 2014.

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