

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
91st General Assembly
Regular Session, 2017

As Engrossed: H2/10/17
A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1425

By: Representatives Vaught, Barker, Cavanaugh, Sturch, G. Hodges

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS CODE CONCERNING THE LICENSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AND LICENSURE EXCEPTIONS; TO AUTHORIZE A TIERED LICENSURE SYSTEM; TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO BASE TEACHER COMPENSATION ON LICENSURE LEVELS APPROVED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CONCERNING THE LICENSURE OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AND LICENSURE EXCEPTIONS; TO AUTHORIZE A TIERED LICENSURE SYSTEM; AND TO ALLOW DISTRICTS TO BASE COMPENSATION ON LICENSURE LEVELS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(a) and (b), concerning licensure assessments for teachers, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1) Arkansas teachers will demonstrate competency in subject matter content on identified assessments appropriate to their teaching area in order to be granted ~~an initial~~ a license to teach in the state under rules promulgated by the State Board of Education.

(2) If there is no assessment available under subdivision (a)(1) of this section for a new licensure area for subject matter content, the Department of Education may request that the state board approve an alternative method of demonstrating subject matter content competency.



(b) In order to obtain a teaching license, Arkansas teachers will demonstrate the ability to increase student academic achievement by demonstrating competency on ~~identified~~ assessments of teaching methods approved by the state board that result in increased student achievement.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(d)-(h), concerning unlicensed teachers in a classroom for more than thirty (30) days, is amended to read as follows:

(d) ~~Effective at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, no~~ A teacher shall not be assigned to teach a grade level or a subject for which he or she is not fully or provisionally licensed by the state unless he or she meets one (1) of the following licensure exceptions as established by rules promulgated by the state board:

(1)(A) An emergency teaching permit granted to a school district for a position filled by a nonlicensed teacher who meets the Arkansas Qualified Teacher Requirements promulgated by the State Board of Education.

(B) An emergency teaching permit may be granted annually for not more than two (2) consecutive school years;

(2) An effective teacher licensure exception granted to a school district for a position to be filled by an Arkansas licensed educator to teach a content area related to the educator's current licensure content area;

(3) A technical permit issued in cooperation with the Department of Career Education;

(4) A licensure exception under:

(A) The District of Innovation Program, § 6-15-2801 et seq.;

(B) The Arkansas Quality Charter Schools Act of 2013, § 6-23-101 et seq.; or

(C) Section 6-15-103;

(5) A plan for adding an area to an existing Arkansas teaching license while teaching in the content area to be added; or

(6) A waiver for a long-term substitute teacher granted under subsection (e) of this section.

(e)(1) For purposes of this section, "long-term substitute" means an individual who:

(A) Holds:

(i) A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; or

(ii) An Arkansas teaching license; and

(B) Is substituting for a teacher of record for thirty-one (31) or more consecutive school days in the same class during a school year.

(2) No class of students shall be under the instruction of a one (1) or more substitute teacher or teachers for more than thirty (30) consecutive school days in the same class during a school year unless the substitute teacher or teachers instructing the class have a bachelor's degree awarded by an accredited college or university or have been licensed to teach by the State of Arkansas school district has obtained a long-term substitute waiver.

~~(2)(3)~~ A long-term substitute teacher or teachers ~~possessing a bachelor's degree~~ shall continue to teach the class from at least the thirty-first consecutive day after the regular teacher is absent from the class until the return of the regular teacher to that class.

~~(f)(4)~~ A person serving as a substitute teacher for thirty (30) days or fewer shall:

~~(1)(A)~~ Be a high school graduate; or

~~(2)(B)~~ Hold a graduate equivalent degree.

~~(g) Subsections (e) and (f) of this section shall not apply to substitutes for nondegree vocational technical teachers.~~

~~(h)(1) If subsections (e) and (f) of this section impose an undue hardship on a school district, the school district may apply to the State Board of Education for a waiver.~~

~~(2)(5)~~ The state board shall develop rules and regulations for granting a long-term substitute waiver.

~~(3) Any school district granted a waiver from this requirement shall be identified in the department's annual school district report card.~~

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-17-402 is amended to read as follows:

6-17-402. Rules and regulations.

(a) The State Board of Education shall issue the license of a classroom teacher, an administrator, a guidance counselor, or a library media specialist in the public schools of this state.

~~(b)(1)~~ The ~~State Board of Education~~ state board shall promulgate rules and regulations for the issuance, licensure, relicensure, and continuance of licensure of public school teachers and administrators in the public schools of this state that:

(1) Require at a minimum that each in-state applicant for teacher licensure:

(A) Completes an educator preparation program approved by the Department of Education, which shall include without limitation:

(i) Educator preparation programs at institutions of higher education leading to a bachelor's degree or higher; and

(ii) Alternative educator preparation programs under § 6-17-409; and

(B) Demonstrates:

(i) Licensure content area knowledge; and

(ii) Knowledge of teaching methods; and

(2) Require at a minimum that each in-state applicant for an administrator's license demonstrates knowledge of state-adopted competencies and standards for educational leaders.

(c) The state board may promulgate rules for a tiered system of licensure, which may include without limitation:

(1) An emergency teaching permit;

(2) A technical permit;

(3)(A) A provisional license.

(B) The state board rules may provide that a provisional license may be issued if the applicant:

(i) Meets the minimum qualifications under subdivision (b)(1)-(2) of this section as applicable to an applicant for a teaching or an administrator license; or

(ii) Partially meets full licensure requirements;

(4) A novice or first-time license;

(5) A standard license; and

(6)(A) A license with advanced requirements.

(B) The state board may authorize a teacher leader advanced license or a teacher leader endorsement to a license.

~~(2)(A) In addition to other requirements, any person applying for initial licensure as a teacher or administrator in the public schools or~~

~~a licensed teacher or administrator applying for a license in an additional area shall take and complete a test recognized by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and approved by the State Board of Education and submit the scores to the Department of Education.~~

~~(B) No applicant for initial licensure or licensure in an additional area shall receive a license after July 1, 2007, unless the applicant scores at or above the minimum level set by the State Board of Education that is consistent with the recommendations of the Professional Licensure Standards Board.~~

(C)(d)(1) The state board shall approve the methods required for applicants to meet the requirements of this section.

(2) All colleges, and universities, and other state-approved programs that prepare teachers and administrators for licensure in this state shall report the results of the examinations any assessments required for licensure to the department upon request.

~~(e)(e) The State Board of Education~~ state board shall not delegate to any college or university any of the ~~State Board of Education's~~ state board's powers or duties pertaining to the ~~issuance,~~ licensure, relicensure, and continuance of licensure of public school teachers and administrators in public schools in this state.

(d)(f)(1) The state board shall promulgate rules for the licensure of individuals through reciprocity of licensure with other states under § 6-17-403.

(2) The State Board of Education state board rules shall waive the examination requirements under ~~subsection (b) of~~ this section for an individual applying for a first-time Arkansas license who has a valid out-of-state teaching license and three (3) years' documented teaching experience ~~as required by the rules promulgated by the State Board of Education.~~

(g) The state board may establish by rule minimum qualified teacher requirements for teachers employed where licensure has been waived pursuant to law.

(h) Rules of the state board shall identify the following as core licensure content areas:

- (1) Early Childhood (K-6);
- (2) English language arts;
- (3) Mathematics;

- (4) Science;
- (5) Social studies;
- (6) Art;
- (7) Music; and
- (8) Foreign language.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-409 is amended to read as follows:

6-17-409. ~~Nontraditional licensure~~ Alternative educator preparation programs.

(a) As used in this section, "alternative educator preparation program" means a program of study approved by the Department of Education for candidates holding a bachelor's degree who are preparing for licensure as teachers and leaders in public schools in this state.

~~(b)(1)~~ The State Board of Education may offer and operate a ~~nontraditional licensure~~ an alternative educator preparation program.

~~(b)(1)(2)(A)~~ The ~~Department of Education~~ department may provide grants of financial assistance to entities that train individuals seeking to obtain ~~nontraditional licensure~~ through ~~the nontraditional licensure process~~ an alternative educator preparation program administered by the department.

~~(2)(B)~~ The department shall pay the grants from funds appropriated by the General Assembly to the department for such purpose.

~~(e)(1)(C)~~ The state board shall promulgate rules ~~and regulations~~ to determine eligibility for and amount of awards of the grants concerning the operation of the ~~nontraditional licensure~~ alternative educator preparation program authorized by this section and for such other purposes as may be necessary in carrying out the intent of this section.

~~(2)(3)~~ The department may refuse to admit for enrollment in the ~~nontraditional licensure~~ alternative educator preparation program administered by the department a person who has been dismissed from a teacher education program at an institution of higher education.

~~(d)(4)~~ If the state board requires an applicant for ~~nontraditional licensure~~ through an alternative educator preparation program to complete one (1) or more additional college-level courses and the applicant has obtained a bachelor's degree, the required course or courses shall ~~meet one (1) or more of the following conditions:~~

~~(1)(A) Each course shall be offered at every state-supported,~~

~~two-year institution of higher education.~~

~~(B) If more than one (1) course is required, all courses shall be offered in a one-semester block; or~~

~~(2) Each course shall be available as an online course, a traditional face-to-face course, or a hybrid course that is part online instruction and part face-to-face instruction, as approved by the department.~~

~~(e)(1) As used in this subsection, "accelerated teaching program" means a program intended for college graduates that provides intensive training and support for a period of two (2) or more years for teaching and leading in schools.~~

~~(2) The state board shall issue a standard five-year teaching license to an applicant if the applicant has:~~

~~(A) Either:~~

~~(i) Successfully completed an accelerated teaching program, including:~~

(c) The state board may promulgate rules for the requirements for educator licensure through other alternative educator preparation programs, including without limitation:

(1) A teacher or leader academy;

(2) A residency program at a public school, which may be in partnership with an educator preparation program at an institution of higher education;

~~(a)(3) The Teach For America, Inc., program;~~

~~(b)(4) The Arkansas Teacher Corps program offered by of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville;~~

~~(e)(5) The American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence program; ~~or~~~~

~~(d)(6) Another ~~accelerated teaching~~ alternative educator preparation program approved by the department; ~~or~~~~

~~(ii)(7) Been awarded A program conferring a master's degree in teaching from an accredited program at an institution of higher education; and or~~

(8) An alternative educator preparation program or pathway for an applicant who has professional work experience in the content area in which the applicant desires to obtain a license.

~~(B) Successfully completed the criminal records checks and~~

~~Child Maltreatment Central Registry check under § 6-17-410.~~

~~(3)(A)(d)(1)~~ The state board shall issue to an applicant who is in an ~~accelerated teaching~~ alternative educator preparation program a provisional teaching license that is issued under the state board's rules governing provisional licensure ~~for nontraditional licensure applicants.~~

~~(B)(2)~~ The provisional license is valid for the entire period that the applicant ~~is~~:

~~(i)(A)~~ Participating ~~Is participating~~ in the ~~accelerated teaching~~ alternative educator preparation program;

~~(B)~~ Has not been determined to have an ethics violation under § 6-17-428; and

~~(ii)(C)~~ Teaching ~~Is teaching~~ in an Arkansas public school.

~~(4)(e)~~ The state board may require an applicant ~~who meets the criteria of subdivision (e)(2) of~~ for licensure under this section to submit proof of the following academic eligibility:

~~(A)(i)(1)(A)~~ Passing scores, as set by the state board, on state-required ~~basic skills,~~ pedagogical, and content-area assessments, or their substantial equivalents.

~~(ii)(B)~~ As used in this subdivision (e)(1), "substantial equivalents" includes without limitation the assessments required by the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence program and an alternative method of demonstrating subject matter content competency identified by the state board under § 6-15-1004;

(2) Successful completion of professional educator ethics training identified by rules of the state board; and

~~(B)(i)(3)~~ If ~~As~~ required by state board rules for the grade level and content area for which the applicant seeks licensure, successful completion of courses in Arkansas history or reading and writing in content areas, or both.

~~(ii)~~ ~~An applicant who has successfully completed an accelerated teaching program is exempt from the requirement of courses in reading and writing in content areas.~~

~~(5)(f)~~ No academic or experience requirements for obtaining an Arkansas teaching license in addition to those identified in ~~this subsection (e)~~ subsections (c)-(e) of this section shall be imposed on an applicant who has completed one of the programs under subdivision (c)(3)-(5) and who

otherwise meets the requirements of this ~~subsection (e)~~ section by:

- (A) The state board;
- (B) The department; or
- (C) An Arkansas state-funded college or university.

~~(f)(1) The state board shall issue a nonrenewable three year provisional professional teaching license to an applicant who submits to the department the following:~~

- ~~(A) Higher education transcripts evidencing the award of at least a baccalaureate degree;~~
- ~~(B) Evidence of a minimum of three (3) years of employment experience in the content area that the applicant seeks to teach;~~
- ~~(C) Evidence of an offer of employment to teach classes for credit in an Arkansas public school;~~
- ~~(D) A statement of justification from the applicant relating the applicant's experience to teaching in the content area in which the applicant seeks to teach;~~
- ~~(E) Two (2) professional letters of recommendation submitted by the applicant's references;~~
- ~~(F) Passing scores on the state-required basic skills and content knowledge tests for the content area in which the applicant seeks to teach; and~~

~~(G) Successful completion of the criminal background checks and Child Maltreatment Central Registry check under § 6-17-410.~~

~~(2)(A) An individual who receives a three year provisional teaching license under this subsection shall have in the first year of provisional licensure twenty four (24) hours of training in pedagogy as determined by the Department of Education.~~

~~(B) The twenty four (24) hours of training in pedagogy are in addition to and not considered a part of the professional development required for teachers by their employing school district or public school.~~

~~(3) At the end of each year of provisional licensure, the licensee shall undergo a summative evaluation as required by Arkansas law.~~

~~(4) At the end of three (3) years of provisional licensure, the state board shall issue a standard five year teaching license to the licensee if the licensee:~~

- ~~(A) Submits passing scores on the state-required~~

~~pedagogical assessment or its substantial equivalent for the content area in which the applicant seeks to teach;~~

~~(B) Is identified by the employing school district as proficient or above on a summative evaluation under § 6-17-2805 for the third year of provisional licensure; and~~

~~(C) Is recommended for full licensure by the superintendent of the employing school district.~~

(g) Each applicant for a provisional license under this section shall successfully complete the criminal records checks and Child Maltreatment Central Registry check under § 6-17-410 before the department may issue the license.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-17-2403(a), concerning the minimum salary schedule required of school districts, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1) The board of directors in each school district in the state shall pay classroom teachers upon a minimum salary schedule that provides:

~~(1)(A)~~ Annual increments for education and experience;

~~(2)(B)~~ A base salary; and

~~(3)(C)~~ A minimum salary for a teacher with a master's degree and at least fifteen (15) years' experience.

(2)(A) A school district may differentiate in the salary levels of the minimum teacher compensation schedule to provide increased salaries based on a tiered licensure system established by the State Board of Education under § 6-17-402.

(B) The differentiated salary schedule shall not provide for a salary that is below the minimum set out in this section.

/s/Vaught