

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1496

By: Representative Andrews

By: Senator J. Dotson

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE TO ENSURE ARKANSAS STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT BY QUALIFIED TEACHERS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE TO ENSURE ARKANSAS STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT BY QUALIFIED TEACHERS.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(b) and (c), concerning requirements to renew a teaching license and licensure exceptions, are amended to read as follows:

(b)(1) To renew a teaching license, a teacher shall participate in continuing education and professional development:

~~(A) Based on the teacher's evaluation and professional growth plan under the Teacher Excellence and Support System, § 6-17-2801 et seq.;~~

~~(B) As required under § 6-17-704 and other laws; and~~

~~(C)(B) As required by rule of the state board.~~

~~(2)(A) For purposes of the requirement for continuing education and professional development under the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, five (5) hours of credit for professional development shall be given for each one (1) hour of college credit for a graduate level course if the college credit is:~~

~~(i) Related to and enhances the teacher's knowledge~~



~~of the subject area in which the teacher is currently teaching;~~

~~(ii) Part of the requirements for the teacher to obtain additional licensure in a subject matter that has been designated by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education as having a critical shortage of teachers; or~~

~~(iii) Otherwise approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education under subdivision (b)(2)(B) of this section as a graduate level course eligible for professional development credit.~~

~~(B)(i) Credit for professional development obtained under subdivision (b)(2)(A) of this section may be allocated as follows:~~

~~(a) Up to fifteen (15) hours may be credited to the professional development requirements for licensure; and~~

~~(b) Hours obtained in excess of fifteen (15) may be credited to any remaining requirements for professional development generally, if approved by the school district in a professional development plan.~~

~~(ii) The allocation of credit for professional development claimed under subdivision (b)(2)(A) of this section shall be approved by the:~~

~~(a) School district or open enrollment public charter school employing the teacher; or~~

~~(b) Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, if the educator is not employed by a school district or an open enrollment public charter school.~~

~~(C) For purposes of the requirement for continuing education and professional development under this section, each hour of training received by licensed personnel related to teaching an advanced placement class for a subject covered by the College Board and Educational Testing Service shall be counted as professional development up to a maximum of thirty (30) hours.~~

~~(3)(2) However, nothing Nothing in subdivision (b)(2) of this section this subsection (b) shall prevent or restrict a school district from requiring additional in-service training.~~

~~(c)(1) A teacher shall ~~not~~ only 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; or for which he or she is on a licensure plan approved by the division.~~

~~(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.~~

~~(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 Division of Career and Technical Education;~~

~~(4) An Aspiring Teacher permit;~~

~~(5) 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;~~

~~(6) A plan for adding an area to an existing Arkansas teaching license while teaching in the content area to be added; or~~

~~(7) A waiver for a long term substitute teacher granted under subsection (d) of this section.~~

(2)(A) At the request of a public school district, the division may approve an individual's licensure plan under this section.

(B) A licensure plan may be initially approved under this section for a period not to exceed three (3) years.

(C)(i) The division may grant, upon the request of an individual on a licensure plan, an extension of a licensure plan for up to two (2) additional years due to an extenuating circumstance.

(ii) However, the division may grant an individual an extension of his or her licensure plan only one (1) time.

(D) The state board may promulgate rules governing licensure plans granted under this section.

(E) The provisions of this subsection (c) shall not be waived under § 6-15-103.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(d), concerning long-term substitutes, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(6) A public school district may request the use of a long-term substitute under this subsection (d) for a specified period not to extend beyond the school year for which the request is made.