

**RULES  
OF  
THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**CHAPTER 0520-02-03  
EDUCATOR LICENSURE**

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**0520-02-03-.01 GENERAL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS.**

(1) Prospective Educators.

- (a) Securing a License. The educator shall be responsible for securing a license, verifying its accuracy, maintaining its validity, registering it with the employing board of education, and meeting the requirements of T.C.A. §49-5-101.
- (b) Unless otherwise designated in this chapter, prospective educators seeking initial licensure must hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university, be enrolled in or have completed a state-approved educator preparation program, and meet all requirements regarding assessments and qualifying scores as specified by State Board of Education rules or policy.
- (c) Prospective educators seeking initial licensure must meet requirements in at least one area of endorsement.
- (d) In-State Applicant for Initial License. An applicant must apply through the appropriate official of the educator preparation provider.
- (e) At the time of application, prospective educators seeking initial licensure must be recommended by an approved educator preparation provider.
  - (i) For applicants who have completed a licensure program, the provider must indicate that the applicant has successfully completed all required components of the program and indicate the area(s) of endorsement for which the applicant has successfully completed requirements. Recommendations must be received within 36 months of program completion.
  - (ii) For applicants who are enrolled in a licensure program, the provider must indicate the area(s) of endorsement for which the applicant has successfully demonstrated content competency. Verification of successful program completion must be submitted before the end of the validity period of the initial license.

- (f) Official transcripts of all college credits, bearing the school seal and/or signature of the registrar, must be submitted with the application. These transcripts and forms upon which licensure is granted become the property of the State of Tennessee. Photocopies are not acceptable.
- (g) Upon receipt of the applications, transcripts, and results of required assessments, materials will be evaluated and a license will be issued to the applicant or the applicant will be notified of deficiencies.

(2) Licensed Educators.

- (a) Duration of License or Certificate. Initial licenses become valid on the date of issuance. The initial license will be valid from the date the license is issued until August 31<sup>st</sup> following the third year in which the educator will be eligible for annual evaluation according to state policy guidelines.
- (b) Performance Expectations. All performance expectations for license advancement and renewal shall be defined in State Board of Education policy.
- (c) Review Status. All review status parameters shall be defined in State Board of Education policy.
- (d) Change of Name. If a licensed educator changes his or her name by legal means, the holder must report such changes to the Office of Educator Licensing.
- (e) Advanced Degree Designation for Salary Purposes. An educator who holds an advanced degree from a regionally accredited institution shall be granted the advanced degree designation for salary purposes if the courses taken are functionally related to the area(s) of endorsement on the teaching license held by the individual or if the degree indicated by the nature of courses that public education was the primary aim as determined by the local education agency.

**0520-02-03-.02 TEACHER LICENSES.**

- (1) General requirements for licensure, as defined in Rule 0520-02-03-.01, apply to all teacher licenses.
- (2) Licenses Currently Issued.
  - (a) Practitioner License. Initial three-year teacher license issued to applicants who hold a bachelor's degree, are enrolled in or have completed a preparation program approved by the State Board of Education, and have submitted qualifying scores on the state required teacher licensure assessments. Renewable (once).
  - (b) Professional License. A six-year teacher license issued upon meeting performance expectations at the practitioner level and completion of an approved educator preparation program. Renewable.
  - (c) Non-Public School Teacher License. A fifteen-year license issued to individuals who qualify for or hold a valid Tennessee teaching license, have current certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or hold a valid license from another state. The non-public license only provides license for an educator to work in a Tennessee non-public school. Renewable once.
  - (d) JROTC Teacher License. A five-year license issued to active or retired military personnel who seek to serve as junior reserve officers' training corps (JROTC) teachers, based upon a certification of preparation by the branch of the military approving the teacher placement. The JROTC teacher license does not entitle an

individual to teach courses other than those designated as part of the JROTC program, consistent with the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-5-108. No other teaching endorsements may be added to a JROTC license. JROTC teachers may earn a teaching license with an endorsement in a content area through an educator preparation program approved by the State Board of Education. Renewable.

- (e) International Teacher Exchange License. The international exchange teacher license is a time-limited license designed to allow eligible teachers from other nations to teach in Tennessee schools for up to three consecutive years. The validity period begins on the date all application requirements for the license are met or July 1, whichever is more recent, and expires on June 30, three years later. If the applicant is employed between January 1 and June 30, the validity period begins on the first day of the month of employment and expires June 30, three years later. If the teacher wishes to remain beyond the third year, the teacher must satisfy all requirements for a professional teacher license. Districts that wish to employ teachers holding this license must adhere to State Board of Education policies regarding mentoring and evaluation of these teachers. Nonrenewable.

Teachers participating in an international teacher exchange program must meet the following criteria:

- (i) Hold primary citizenship outside the United States;
  - (ii) Hold the U.S. equivalent of a bachelor's degree or higher;
  - (iii) Hold a foreign teacher credential in a field comparable to that recognized in Tennessee;
  - (iv) Demonstrate proficiency in English;
  - (v) Provide verification from a Tennessee director of schools of intent to employ; and
  - (vi) Provide a recommendation by the government of a country with whom the Department of Education has signed a memorandum of agreement or by a recognized international exchange program.
- (f) Adjunct Instructor Permit. The adjunct instructor permit is a one-year permit designed to allow individuals who complete approved, specialized training to teach up to one-half of a day in a Tennessee public school. Renewable.

### (3) License Advancement and Renewal.

- (a) Practitioner License. At the end of the validity period of the initial practitioner license, if the teacher has not met performance expectations, the practitioner license will be renewed once. If the teacher has not met performance expectations at the end of the second validity period, the license will not be renewed or advanced.
- (b) Professional License. At the end of the validity period of the professional license, if the teacher has not met performance expectations, the professional license will be extended for one year under review status. If the teacher has not met performance expectations at the end of the review status period, the license will not be renewed.

### (4) Additional Endorsements.

- (a) Licensed teachers must submit qualifying scores on all required, state-approved teacher licensure specialty assessments for additional endorsements.
- (b) Licensed teachers seeking to add endorsements may complete an educator preparation program. In some cases, as defined in State Board policy, teachers may add an endorsement by using a test-only option when the grade span of the endorsement held closely matches the endorsement being added.

- (c) Licensed teachers who complete programs of study for additional endorsements at education preparation providers in other states may be recommended by the out-of-state provider to the Tennessee Department of Education.

**0520-02-03-.03 RESERVED.****0520-02-03-.04 SCHOOL SERVICE PERSONNEL LICENSES.**

- (1) General requirements for licensure, as defined in Rule 0520-02-03-.01, apply to all school service personnel licenses.
- (2) Licenses Currently Issued.
  - (a) Practitioner School Service Personnel License. Initial three-year license issued to applicants upon completion of a preparation program approved by the State Board of Education, leading to endorsement as a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school food service supervisor, school speech-language pathologist, or school audiologist. Applicants must have also submitted qualifying scores on the state required licensure assessment. Renewable (once).
  - (b) Professional School Service Personnel License. A six-year license issued to applicants upon meeting performance expectations at the practitioner level, as a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school food service supervisor, school speech-language pathologist, or school audiologist. Renewable.
- (3) License Advancement and Renewal.
  - (a) Practitioner School Service Personnel License. At the end of the validity period of the initial practitioner license, if the educator has not met performance expectations, the practitioner license will be renewed once. If the educator has not met performance expectations at the end of the second validity period, the license will not be renewed or advanced.
  - (b) Professional School Service Personnel License. At the end of the validity period of the professional license, if the educator has not met performance expectations, the professional license will be extended for one year under review status. If the educator has not met performance expectations at the end of the review status period, the license will not be renewed.

**0520-02-03-.05 OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION LICENSE.**

- (1) General requirements for licensure, as defined in Rule 0520-02-03-.01, apply to all occupational education licenses, except for the requirement of a bachelor's degree.
- (2) Licenses Currently Issued.
  - (a) Practitioner Occupational Education License. Initial three-year license issued to applicants who have met endorsement requirements pursuant to State Board of Education policy and have had content verification provided by the Tennessee Department of Education. Renewable (once).
  - (b) Professional Occupational Education License. A six-year license issued to applicants upon meeting performance expectations at the practitioner level, completing coursework covering the professional education standards and additional requirements as defined in State Board

of Education policy. Renewable.

(3) License Advancement and Renewal.

(a) Practitioner Occupational Education License. At the end of the validity period of the initial practitioner license, if the educator has not met performance expectations, the practitioner license will be renewed once. If the educator has not met performance expectations at the end of the second validity period, the license will not be renewed or advanced.

(b) Professional Occupational Education License. At the end of the validity period of the professional license, if the educator has not met performance expectations, the professional license will be extended for one year under review status. If the educator has not met performance expectations at the end of the review status period, the license will not be renewed.

**0520-02-03-.06 OUT OF STATE APPLICANTS.**

(1) General Requirements.

(a) Tennessee has adopted the provisions of Interstate Agreement on Qualification of Educational Personnel as proposed by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC). Participation in this agreement is evidenced by signed reciprocal contracts between Tennessee and other participating states as defined by the Interstate Certification Project (ICP).

(b) Licensure may be awarded to applicants from states which are not parties to the ICP but which are accredited by or affiliated with the national accrediting body with which the State of Tennessee has entered into an agreement on the same basis as those applying from states which are party to the ICP agreement.

(c) Licensure may be awarded to applicants not covered by (a) or (b) above on the same basis as those applying from states which are party to the ICP agreement if one of the following conditions is met:

(i) The applicant has received a recommendation from an educator preparation provider which is accredited by the same national accrediting body with which the State of Tennessee has entered into an agreement; or

(ii) The Tennessee Department of Education has reviewed a state's process for approving educator preparation providers and has found the process to be acceptable for purposes of granting full licensure in Tennessee.

(d) An applicant from a state other than Tennessee must apply directly to the Office of Educator Licensing.

(e) The application for licensure must be accompanied by a set of official transcripts supplied by all institutions attended by the applicant.

(f) An applicant from another state must submit qualifying scores for assessments required by the State Board of Education. Scores must have been obtained within five years prior to the date of application for licensure.

(g) No license or endorsement which requires the master's degree or above as part of its requirements may be awarded to an individual not possessing said degree.

(2) Teacher Licensure for Applicants Trained in Other States.

- (a) Applicants meeting all requirements will be issued a practitioner license except those who have been certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards who will be issued a professional license.
  - (b) Licensure will be awarded in all endorsement areas (the areas most similar to those awarded in Tennessee), which are reflected on the full, currently valid licensure credential(s) supplied by the other qualifying state(s) and the area most closely related to the area of certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
  - (c) Applicants with an out-of-state endorsement in a teaching area covering a grade span that is more narrow than the comparable Tennessee K-12 teaching endorsement, shall be awarded the Tennessee endorsement based on parameters defined by State Board policy.
- (3) School Service Personnel Licensure for Applicants Trained in Other States.
- (a) Applicants meeting all requirements will be issued a practitioner license.
  - (b) The Practitioner School Services Personnel license will be awarded to applicants who hold a full and valid school service personnel license from another state.

**0520-02-03-.07 OTHER SPECIAL CASES.**

- (1) Correspondence and Extension Credit. Credit earned by correspondence and extension instruction with a member of the National University Extension Association or the Teacher College Association for Extension and Field Services shall be accepted for licensure purposes to the extent of one fourth of the amount of credit necessary for the particular license desired.
- (2) Experience in Lieu of Student Teaching. An individual applying for a license who holds at least a bachelor's degree may present evidence of 3 years of successful teaching experience in an approved school or a National Association for the Education of Young Children NAEYC accredited early childhood education program at the grade level of work authorized by the endorsement sought in lieu of student teaching.
- (3) Military Service.
  - (a) The duration of a license may be extended from the date of termination of military service for the number of years, not to exceed four, which the holder spent in military service during the life of the license. Four calendar months military service during any school year shall be counted as a full year for purposes of extending the license.
  - (b) The five years preceding the issuance of a teacher license, within which time academic credit must be earned, shall not include the years spent in military service.
- (4) Validation of Credit from an Unapproved Institution.
  - (a) Credit from an unapproved institution may be accepted for licensure when such credit has been accepted in full on a transcript by an approved institution for advanced standing toward a degree, provided that not less than eight (8) semester hours of satisfactory work has been completed in the approved institution.
  - (b) Degree or credit from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association but not approved for teacher education will be accepted.
  - (c) An applicant who holds the bachelor's degree from an unapproved institution and has

otherwise met all of the requirements for a license may validate the degree and apply for a license as follows:

- (i) Enter an approved graduate school and complete a minimum of eight (8) semester hours in an approved educator preparation program. The applicant must successfully complete the approved educator preparation program in order to advance to a professional license.
  - (ii) Secure a properly certified statement from an educator preparation program approved by the State Board of Education indicating all deficiencies and/or probations have been met.
- (5) Emergency Teaching Credential. A one-year credential, effective for only one school year, to be issued to displaced licensed teachers under one of the following circumstances:
- (a) The Governor declares a state of emergency or declares a disaster under TCA 58-2-107, and the Commissioner of Education determines the necessity of conferring an emergency credential to displaced persons, or
  - (b) A federal state of emergency is declared anywhere in the United States, and the Commissioner of Education determines the necessity of conferring an emergency credential to displaced persons.

#### **0520-02-03-.08 PERMITS.**

(1) Permits.

- (a) The state may issue a permit when a school district or public charter school meets the following requirements:
  - (i) A director of schools or public charter school leader must state intent to employ and indicate the position to be held by the applicant.
  - (ii) The school district or public charter school must indicate that it is unable to obtain the services of a licensed educator for the type and kind of school in which a vacancy exists.
  - (iii) The school district or public charter school must identify and document a targeted recruitment strategy for the position or shortage areas. The strategy may include, but is not limited to, partnerships with educator preparation providers, advertisements, or recruitment campaigns.
- (b) The state may issue a permit to a school district or public charter school to hire an applicant one time and only if the applicant holds a bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree is not required for an applicant in occupational education.

#### **0520-02-03-.09 DENIAL, SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION.**

- (1) Automatic Revocation of License. The State Board of Education shall automatically revoke the license of a licensed teacher or administrator without the right to a hearing upon receiving verification of the identity of the teacher or administrator together with a certified copy of a criminal record showing that the teacher or school administrator has been convicted of any felony or offense listed at T.C.A. § 40-35-501(i)(2) or T.C.A. § 39-17-417 (including conviction on a plea of guilty or nolo contendere). The Board will notify persons whose licenses are subject to automatic revocation at least 30 days prior

to the Board meeting at which such revocation shall occur.

- (2) Denial, Suspension or Revocation of License. The State Board of Education may revoke, suspend or refuse to issue or renew a license for the following reasons:
  - (a) Conviction of a felony,
  - (b) Conviction of possession of narcotics,
  - (c) Being on school premises or at a school-related activity involving students while documented as being under the influence of, possessing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs,
  - (d) Falsification or alteration of a license or documentation required for licensure,
  - (e) Denial, suspension or revocation of a license or certificate in another jurisdiction for reasons which would justify denial, suspension or revocation under this rule, or
  - (f) Other good cause. Other good cause shall be construed to include noncompliance with security guidelines for TCAP or successor tests pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-607, default on a student loan pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-5-108(d)(2) or failure to report under part (e).

For purposes of this part (2), "conviction" includes entry of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or entry of an order granting pre-trial or judicial diversion.

A person whose license has been denied, suspended or revoked may not serve as a volunteer or be employed, directly or indirectly, as an educator, paraprofessional, aide, substitute teacher or in any other position during the period of the denial, suspension or revocation.

- (3) Restoration of License.
  - (a) A person whose license has been suspended shall have the license restored after the period of suspension has been completed, and, where applicable, the person has complied with any terms prescribed by the State Board of Education. Suspended licenses are subject to expiration and renewal rules of the State Board of Education.
  - (b) A person whose license has been denied or revoked under parts (1) or (2) may apply to the State Board of Education to have the license issued or restored upon application showing that the cause for denial or revocation no longer exists and that the person has complied with any terms imposed in the order of denial or revocation. In the case of a felony conviction, before an application will be considered, the person must also show that any sentence imposed, including any pre-trial diversion or probationary period has been completed. Application for such issuance or restoration shall be made to the Office of Teacher Licensing and shall be voted on at a regularly scheduled meeting of the State Board of Education. Nothing in this section is intended to guarantee restoration of a license.
- (4) Notice of Hearing. Any person whose license is to be denied, suspended or revoked under part (2) or who is refused a license or certificate under part (3) shall be entitled to written notice and an opportunity for a hearing to be conducted as a contested case under the Tennessee Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, T.C.A. §4-5-301, et seq.
- (5) Notification of Office of Educator Licensing. It is the responsibility of the superintendent

of the employing public or non-public school or school district to inform the Office of Educator Licensing of licensed teachers or administrators who have been suspended or dismissed, or who have resigned, following allegations of conduct which, if substantiated, would warrant consideration for license suspension or revocation under parts (1) or (2). The report shall be submitted within thirty (30) days of the suspension, dismissal or resignation. The superintendent shall also report felony convictions of licensed teachers or administrators within 30 days of receiving knowledge of the conviction.

**0520-02-03-.10 REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSURE RENEWAL OR ADVANCEMENT.**

- (1) Eligibility for License Renewal or Advancement. An individual shall not be eligible for license renewal or advancement unless the individual has met the minimum performance expectations established by the State Board of Education.
  - (a) Any individual deemed ineligible for license renewal or advancement may request the State Board of Education to review, on the record, the eligibility determination; provided, however, such review shall be limited solely to an examination of performance data leading to the eligibility determination and in compliance with State Board of Education policy.
  - (b) If the State Board of Education determines that the individual's most recent performance data demonstrates significant improvement such that licensure is warranted, the Board may extend, renew or advance the license, provided the individual has submitted with his or her request for review a letter of support indicating an intent to employ the individual from a school district or charter school where such license is required for employment. The decision of the State Board of Education shall be final and not subject to further review.
  - (c) Nothing in this section is intended to guarantee issuance of a license.
  - (d) Nothing in this section shall prohibit an individual from being issued a practitioner license upon re-enrolling in or completing an approved educator licensure program and otherwise meeting all requirements necessary for licensure.