



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2021

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State Board Streamlines Licensure for Out of State Teachers

On Thursday, members of the State Board of Education met to vote on time-sensitive emergency rules, including the [Educator Licensure Emergency Rule](#). This item streamlines pathways for educators licensed in other states to obtain a Tennessee license. The emergency rule also includes provisions to allow formerly licensed Tennessee teachers with an active out of state license to reactivate their Tennessee license.

“We know districts are making final hiring decisions now for the upcoming school year, and they need to be sure prospective educators are eligible to obtain a license,” said Dr. Sara Morrison, executive director of the State Board of Education. “That is why we convened this meeting to update our rules the same day that recent statutory changes went into effect.”

The provisions included in the Educator Licensure Emergency Rule were established earlier this year in Public Chapters 125 and 493. These laws go into effect on July 1, 2021. By aligning the State Board’s educator licensure rule with the recently passed laws, educators can have their licensure applications processed more quickly. These changes will help local education agencies (LEAs) with hiring decisions over the summer.

During the special called meeting, members of the Board considered two other emergency rules in the areas of virtual education and quarantine protocols. The [Public Virtual Schools Emergency Rule](#) clarifies the difference between full-time virtual schools and virtual course options a student may take to expand their educational opportunities while enrolled in their traditional school. These options can include advanced or accelerated course programs as well as remedial opportunities.

“Strong virtual courses can provide students more options and more flexibility in meeting their educational goals. Especially at the secondary level, they may also help them to meet their future career goals by, for example, freeing up time during part of the traditional school day for programs like work-based learning,” Dr. Morrison said.

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Under the [School Health Policies Emergency Rule](#), LEAs and public charter schools may adopt policies for the 2021-22 school year permitting remote instruction for students who are quarantined due to a positive COVID-19 test on a temporary basis only. These policies are optional for LEAs and public charter schools to establish and address student-specific health needs rather than school- or district-level closures.

“While we all hope the pandemic’s effects on education are winding down, we recognize that students may at times be advised to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure. Students who are not ill should be able to continue to learn during that quarantine period,” Dr. Morrison said.

All meeting materials, including the agenda and live stream link, are available on the [State Board of Education website](#).

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The Tennessee State Board of Education is a ten-member, governor-appointed and legislatively confirmed board charged under the law with rulemaking and policymaking for K-12 education. Through a close partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education, the Board maintains oversight in K-12 implementation and academic standards.