

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021**

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SENATE BILL 298

Short Title: Teacher Licensure/Retired Educator Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators McInnis, Johnson, and Barnes (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 16, 2021

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO MAKE CHANGES TO TEACHER LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS AND TO
EXTEND AND EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO ALLOW RETIRED EDUCATORS TO
RETURN TO WORK IN HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. TEACHER LICENSURE CHANGES

SECTION 1.1.(a) G.S. 115C-270.20(a)(4a) reads as rewritten:

"(4a) Limited license. – A three-year ~~nonrenewable~~ renewable license issued to an individual who meets the requirements of this subdivision. A limited license shall only be requested by the local board of education currently employing or seeking to employ the individual and shall be used for continued employment only in that local school administrative unit. The State Board shall not require individuals to demonstrate preparation through achieving a prescribed minimum score on a standardized examination for a limited license. To receive a limited license, one of the following shall be met:

a. In-state licensee. – Both of the following are met:

1. The individual was issued an IPL or RL, but failed to fulfill examination requirements under G.S. 115C-270.15 after three years of licensure.
2. The local board of education submits to the State Board an affidavit stating that the teacher is currently employed by that local board, is an effective teacher, and will be encouraged to continue to pursue a CPL. The affidavit shall be signed by both the principal and superintendent for the school to which the teacher is currently assigned.

b. Out-of-state licensee. – Both of the following are met:

1. The individual holds current teacher licensure in another state that is in good standing.
2. The local board of education submits to the State Board an affidavit stating that the local board seeks to employ the teacher, that the teacher has been employed as a licensed teacher in another state for at least three years, and that the teacher will be encouraged to pursue an IPL or CPL, as appropriate for that teacher. The affidavit shall be signed by



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the superintendent for the local board of education seeking to employ the teacher.

For renewal of a limited license, the local board of education shall evaluate the teacher's effectiveness every three years. For teachers that teach subjects that use the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), the data must demonstrate that the teacher meets or exceeds expectations of growth as measured by EVAAS, if available."

SECTION 1.1.(b) This section applies (i) to any teacher who holds a limited license as nonrenewable as of the date this act becomes law and (ii) beginning with applications submitted on or after the date this act becomes law.

SECTION 1.2.(a) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction and the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC), shall develop an alternative to the examination requirements for conversion from an initial professional license (IPL) and a residency license (RL) to a continuing professional license (CPL) under G.S. 115C-270.15. The alternative to the examination shall provide for a process to accommodate different circumstances in which the examination may not be required or be the most appropriate or efficient pathway of evaluating a teacher's readiness or effectiveness for licensure.

In addition, the State Board, in consultation with the Department and PEPSC, shall examine issues related to licensure classes and teacher salary, including ways to increase recruitment and retention by directly corresponding classes of licensure with amount of compensation. In conducting the study, the State Board shall identify any changes in State law necessary for any proposed recommendations resulting from the findings.

SECTION 1.2.(b) By February 15, 2022, the State Board, in consultation with the Department and PEPSC, shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on (i) the development of the alternative to examination requirements for conversion of IPLs and RLs to CPLs, (ii) any proposed salary incentives tied to classes of licensure, and (iii) any legislative changes needed for implementation of the recommendations.

PART II. EXTEND AND EXPAND THE PROGRAM TO ALLOW RETIRED EDUCATORS TO RETURN TO WORK IN HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS

SECTION 2.(a) Section 6 of S.L. 2019-110 reads as rewritten:

"**SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2019, and expires June 30, ~~2024~~, 2024."

SECTION 2.(b) Subsection (f) of Section 7 of S.L. 2019-212 reads as rewritten:

"**SECTION 7.(f)** This section becomes effective July 1, 2019, and expires June 30, ~~2021~~, 2024."

SECTION 2.(c) G.S. 115C-302.4 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-302.4. **High-need retired teachers.**

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this ~~section~~ section, unless the context requires otherwise:

(1) High-need retired teacher. – A teacher who is a beneficiary of the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina who meets both of the following requirements:

a. Retired on or before February 1, 2019, after attaining (i) the age of at least 65 with five years of creditable service, (ii) the age of at least 60 with 25 years of creditable service, or (iii) 30 years of creditable service.

b. Is reemployed by a local board of education ~~to provide classroom instruction~~ as a teacher, as defined in G.S. 135-1(25), employed on an annual contract ~~to provide classroom instruction~~ exclusively at a high-need school or schools.

- (2) High-need school. – A school that, at any point on or after July 1, 2017, meets one of the following criteria:
- a. Is a Title I school. As used in this sub-subdivision, a Title I school is a school identified under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended.
 - b. Receives an overall school performance grade of D or F, as calculated by the State Board of Education pursuant to G.S. 115C-83.15(d).
- (3) STEM. – Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- (4) Teacher. – Licensed personnel who are classified as teachers or instructional support personnel.
- (b) Salary Level. – A high-need retired teacher shall be compensated as follows:
- (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, a high-need retired teacher shall be paid on the first step of the teacher salary schedule.
 - (2) If a high-need retired teacher ~~serves as a teacher in any of the following licensure areas,~~ meets any of the following criteria, he or she shall be paid on the sixth step of the teacher salary schedule:
 - a. Provides classroom instruction in any of the following licensure areas:
 - ~~a.1.~~ STEM.
 - ~~b.2.~~ Special education.
 - b. Is any of the following:
 1. A school psychologist.
 2. A school speech pathologist who is licensed as a speech pathologist at the master's degree level or higher.
 3. A school audiologist who is licensed as an audiologist at the master's degree level or higher.
- (c) No State Salary Supplements or Increase in Salary. – A high-need retired teacher shall not receive any State salary supplement or State bonus. A high-need retired teacher shall not move beyond the salary steps prescribed by subsection (b) of this section, regardless of the length of time spent as a high-need retired teacher.
- (d) Local Salary Supplement. – A high-need retired teacher shall receive any local salary supplements that are given to employees of the local board of education.
- (e) Term of Contract. – A contract between the local board of education and a high-need retired teacher shall be for a term of no more than one school year.
- (f) Identification of STEM and Special Education Licensure Areas. – The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall identify and provide to each local school administrative unit a list of STEM and special education licensure areas that qualify for reemployment pursuant to subdivision (b)(2) of this section. Local school administrative units shall make the list of STEM and special education licensure areas available to high-need retired teachers."

SECTION 2.(d) Section 5(d) of S.L. 2019-110, as amended by Section 7(c) of S.L. 2019-212, reads as rewritten:

"SECTION 5.(d) Any beneficiary that is employed ~~to teach~~ by a local board of education as a high-need retired teacher, as defined in G.S. 115C-302.4(a)(1), shall not be eligible to elect into a position that would lead him or her to be eligible to accrue any additional benefits under G.S. 135-3(8). Any failure of a local board of education or a beneficiary to comply with the foregoing shall be corrected by the Retirement System as it determines may be appropriate under State and federal law. Any costs of the correction, as determined by the Retirement System, shall be the sole responsibility of the local board of education and shall be transferred to the Pension Accumulation Fund under G.S. 135-8, under rules adopted by the Board of Trustees."

SECTION 2.(e) This section is effective when this act becomes law and expires June 30, 2024.

PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 3. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.