

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10206-NG-82

Short Title: Principal Licensure Changes. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Willis.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO UPDATE PRINCIPAL LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS, TO DEVELOP A  
PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND TO STUDY METHODS TO IMPROVE  
PRINCIPAL PREPARATION AND LICENSURE PROCESSES, AS RECOMMENDED  
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. PRINCIPAL LICENSURE REQUIREMENT UPDATES AND CONFORMING  
CHANGES**

**SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 115C-270.5(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Authority. – The State Board of Education shall have entire control of licensing all applicants for professional educator positions and school administrator positions in all public schools of North Carolina, subject to the requirements of this Article. The State Board shall adopt rules for the issuance, renewal, and extension of all licenses and shall determine and fix the salary for each grade and type of license which it authorizes."

**SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 115C-270.20(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) Administrator and Student Services Personnel. – The State Board shall establish classification and levels of preparation necessary for issuance of licenses for administrators and student services ~~personnel~~ personnel as follows:

(1) Administrator license. – The State Board of Education shall have entire control of licensing of all applicants for supervisory and professional positions in all public schools of North Carolina, and the Board shall adopt rules for the renewal and extension of all licenses and shall determine and fix the salary for each grade and type of license which it authorizes. The Board shall not issue provisional licenses for principals. To qualify for licensure as a school administrator, an individual must meet all of the following requirements:

- a. Submit a complete application to the State Board.
- b. Pay the applicable fee.
- c. Attain a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or accredited university.
- d. Complete an accredited school administrator preparation program meeting the criteria listed in G.S. 115C-284(c2). Any participating college or university approved by the State Board of Education prior to January 1, 2023, may also be deemed accredited for the purposes of this section.



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- e. Have at least four years of experience as a licensed professional educator and any of the following:
1. Possesses a Master's of School Administration (MSA).
  2. Possesses a Master's of Education degree in Educational Leadership.
  3. Has completed an add-on licensure program if the candidate holds a master's degree in an education-related field.
- f. Submit a portfolio to the State Board for approval that meets criteria adopted by the State Board.
- (2) Provisional assistant principal license. – The Board shall issue a one-year provisional assistant principal license to an employee of a local board only in either of the following circumstances:
- a. The local board determines the following:
    1. There is a demonstrated need for administrators.
    2. The employee enrolls in an approved school administration program leading to a master's degree in school administration or educational leadership before the provisional license expires.
  - b. The employee meets the following criteria:
    1. Is enrolled in an approved master's in school administration program.
    2. Is participating in the required internship under the master's program.
- The Board shall extend the provisional license for a total of no more than two additional years while the employee is completing the program.
- (3) Continuing education. – The State Board of Education shall include continuing education in high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning as a requirement of licensure renewal."

**SECTION 1.(c)** G.S. 115C-284 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 115C-284. Method of selection and requirements.**

- (a) Principals and supervisors shall be elected by the local boards of education upon the recommendation of the superintendent, in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 115C-276(j).
- (b) In the city administrative units, principals shall be elected by the board of education of such administrative unit upon the recommendation of the superintendent of city schools.
- ~~(b1) To qualify for certification as a school administrator, an individual must meet all of the following requirements:~~
  - ~~(1) Submit a complete application to the State Board.~~
  - ~~(2) Pay the applicable fee.~~
  - ~~(3) Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or accredited university.~~
  - ~~(4) Have one of the following:~~
    - ~~a. A graduate degree from a public school administration program that meets the public school administration program approval standards established by the State Board of Education.~~
    - ~~b. A master's degree from an accredited college or accredited university and, by December 31, 1999, have completed a public school administration program that meets the public school administration program approval standards set by the State Board of Education.~~
    - ~~c. Education and training determined by the State Board of Education as equivalent.~~
  - ~~(5) Pass the exam adopted by the State Board.~~

(c) ~~The State Board of Education shall have entire control of certifying all applicants for supervisory and professional positions in all public elementary and high schools of North Carolina; and it shall prescribe the rules and regulations for the renewal and extension of all certificates, and shall determine and fix the salary for each grade and type of certificate which it authorizes. The State Board of Education shall require each applicant for an initial certificate or graduate certificate to demonstrate the applicant's academic and professional preparation by achieving a prescribed minimum score at least equivalent to that required by the Board on November 30, 1972, on a standard examination appropriate and adequate for that purpose. If the Board shall specify the National Teachers Examination for this purpose, the required minimum score shall not be lower than that which the Board required on November 30, 1972. The Board shall not issue provisional certificates for principals.~~

~~The Board shall issue a one-year provisional assistant principal's certificate to an employee of a local board only if: (i) the local board determines there is a shortage of persons who hold or are qualified to hold a principal's certificate and the employee enrolls in an approved program leading to a masters degree in school administration before the provisional certificate expires; or (ii) the employee is enrolled in an approved masters in school administration program and is participating in the required internship under the masters program. The Board shall extend the provisional certificate for a total of no more than two additional years while the employee is completing the program.~~

(c1) ~~It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to maintain the highest quality principal and assistant principal education programs in order to enhance the competence of professional personnel certified in North Carolina. To ensure that principal and assistant principal preparation programs are upgraded to reflect a more rigorous course of study, the State Board of Education shall submit to the General Assembly not later than March 1, 1992, a plan to promote this policy. In developing this plan, the State Board shall consider (i) requiring these programs to include additional preparation for site-based decision making and for the additional autonomy being granted to local school units, (ii) enhancing program entrance requirements to include assessment of an applicant's ability to complete the program and to perform as a principal, and (iii) enhancing the overall content of the programs.~~

~~The State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination and cooperation with the University Board of Governors and such other public and private agencies as are necessary, shall refine the several certification requirements, standards for approval of institutions of principal and assistant principal education, standards for institution-based innovative and experimental programs, and standards for improved efficiencies in the administration of the approved programs.~~

(c2) ~~The State Board of Education shall adopt new standards by July 1, 2008, and associated rules~~ for school administrator preparation programs. The ~~new~~ standards shall:

- (1) ~~Be aligned with the revised standards for the evaluation of school executives and specifically address the use of the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey; Survey.~~
- (2) ~~Require evidence of a high level of institutional commitment, including dedicated resources, for administrator preparation program improvements and redesign; redesign.~~
- (3) ~~Require the use of cross-functional work teams to determine a common curriculum framework that (i) is designed to align with defined standards, (ii) includes rigorous core courses, and (iii) will produce administrators who meet the defined standards. The cross-functional work teams shall include school-based personnel, faculty from schools of education and other disciplines from institutions of higher education, and representatives of State agencies; agencies.~~

- (4) Require the use of cross-functional work teams to design and periodically update specific standards regarding placement, required activities, and evaluations of clinical experiences. These standards shall include appropriate training for the school leaders who agree to accept and supervise ~~interns;interns.~~
- (5) Require written agreements between the institution of higher education and a local school administrative unit to govern their shared responsibility for (i) recruitment and preparation of school administrators, especially with regard to clinical experiences including the internship, and (ii) a new administrator's success once ~~employed;employed.~~
- (6) Require authentic partnerships between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty to fully address the need for both practical, field-based experience and academic, theory-based experience. These partnerships may require a change in the institution of higher education's definition of scholarly activity and its reward ~~system;system.~~
- (7) Require all candidates to complete ~~a year-long internship; and~~ an internship that is at least 1,000 hours in duration.
- (8) Require the development of portfolios for emerging leaders that provide evidence they are applying their training to actual school needs and challenges.

~~Institutions of higher education shall redesign their school administrator preparation programs to meet the new standards and report to the State Board of Education on the redesign by July 1, 2009. The State Board of Education shall develop rules to determine whether an applicant who completed a school administrator preparation program outside the State meets or exceeds the requirements to hold a North Carolina school administrator license.~~

(c3) The State Board of Education shall require that all students in school administrator preparation programs demonstrate competencies in (i) using digital and other instructional technologies and (ii) supporting teachers and other school personnel to use digital and other instructional technologies to ensure provision of high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning to all students. ~~The State Board of Education shall include continuing education in high quality, integrated digital teaching and learning as a requirement of licensure renewal.~~

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 385, s. 1.

~~(d1) It is the policy of the State of North Carolina that, subsequent to the adoption of a system of classroom teacher differentiation and prerequisites to candidacy for principal, a classroom teacher must have attained at least the second level of differentiation, have at least four years of classroom teaching experience, and possess, at least, a Masters Degree in Education Administration. This subsection shall not apply to educational personnel certified as of July 1, 1984.~~

(e) It shall be unlawful for any board of education to employ or keep in service any principal or supervisor who neither holds nor is qualified to hold a license in compliance with the provision of the law or in accordance with the regulations of the State Board of Education. However, a local board of education may select a retired principal or retired assistant principal to serve as an interim principal for the remainder of any school year, regardless of licensure status.

(f) The allotment of classified principals shall be one principal for each duly constituted school with seven or more state-allotted teachers.

(g) Local boards of education shall have authority to employ supervisors in addition to those that may be furnished by the State when, in the discretion of the board of education, the schools of the local school administrative unit can thereby be more efficiently and more economically operated and when funds for the same are provided in the current expense fund

1 budget. The duties of such supervisors shall be assigned by the superintendent with the approval  
2 of the board of education.

3 (h) All principals and supervisors employed in the public schools of the State or in  
4 schools receiving public funds, shall be required either to hold or be qualified to hold a ~~certificate~~  
5 license in compliance with the provision of the law or in accordance with the regulations of the  
6 State Board of Education."

7 **SECTION 1.(d)** G.S. 115C-238.68(1) reads as rewritten:

8 "(1) Principal. – The board of directors shall employ and contract with a principal  
9 for a term not to exceed three years. The principal shall meet the requirements  
10 for ~~certification~~ licensure set out in ~~G.S. 115C-284~~, G.S. 115C-270.20(b),  
11 unless waived by the State Board of Education upon submission of a request  
12 by the board of directors. The principal shall be responsible for school  
13 operations and shall exercise those duties and powers delegated by the board  
14 of directors."

15 **SECTION 1.(e)** G.S. 115C-287.1(h) reads as rewritten:

16 "(h) An individual who holds a provisional assistant principal's license and who is  
17 employed as an assistant principal under ~~G.S. 115C-284(e)~~ G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(2) shall be  
18 considered a school administrator for purposes of this section. Notwithstanding subsection (b) of  
19 this section, a local board may enter into one-year contracts with a school administrator who  
20 holds a provisional assistant principal's license. If the school administrator held career status as  
21 a teacher in the local school administrative unit prior to being employed as an assistant principal  
22 and the State Board of Education for any reason does not extend the school administrator's  
23 provisional assistant principal's license, the school administrator shall retain career status as a  
24 teacher unless the school administrator voluntarily relinquished career status or is dismissed or  
25 demoted pursuant to G.S. 115C-325. Nothing in this subsection or ~~G.S. 115C-284(e)~~  
26 G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(2) shall be construed to require a local board to extend or renew the contract  
27 of a school administrator who holds a provisional assistant principal's license."

28 **SECTION 1.(f)** G.S. 116-239.10(1) reads as rewritten:

29 "(1) Principal. – The constituent institution shall employ and contract with a  
30 principal for a term not to exceed three years. The principal shall meet the  
31 requirements for licensure set out in ~~G.S. 115C-284~~, G.S. 115C-270.20(b),  
32 unless waived, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public  
33 Instruction, by the State Board of Education upon submission of a request by  
34 the chancellor that is approved by the Subcommittee. The principal shall be  
35 responsible for school operations and shall exercise those duties and powers  
36 delegated by the chancellor."

37 **SECTION 1.(g)** Except as otherwise provided, this section is effective when it  
38 becomes law and applies beginning with applications for administrator licensure submitted on or  
39 after July 1, 2025.  
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## 41 **PART II. DEVELOPMENT OF PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT**

42 **SECTION 2.** The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission  
43 (PEPSC), in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina  
44 Principal Fellows Commission, shall develop a portfolio-based assessment system for use in  
45 applications for administrator licensure pursuant to G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(1). PEPSC shall  
46 present recommendations to the State Board of Education for approval by June 15, 2024.  
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## 48 **PART III. STUDY TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION AND** 49 **LICENSURE PROCESSES**

50 **SECTION 3.** The Department of Public Instruction, in consultation with the  
51 Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC), shall study ways to

1 improve school administrator licensure and preparation processes to ensure that all school  
2 administrators in the State are prepared to lead schools that provide high-quality instruction to  
3 all students. The Department shall develop recommended changes to the licensure and  
4 preparation processes based on this study. The Department shall submit the results of the study  
5 and the recommended changes to the State Board of Education and the Joint Legislative  
6 Education Oversight Committee by February 15, 2024.

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8 **PART IV. EFFECTIVE DATE**

9 **SECTION 4.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
10 law.