

Teacher Licensure Opportunities for Service Members and Spouses

Supporting Military Spouses

Joining Forces, an initiative championed by Dr. Jill Biden, works hand in hand with the public and private sectors to ensure that service members, veterans, and their families have the tools they need to succeed throughout their lives.

One challenge military families face is employment of the military spouse upon frequent relocations. Due to the widely varying requirements for teacher certification and licensure across states, the process for a licensed teacher to attain certification and licensure in a new state may require extensive documentation and additional testing and coursework. This process can be time-consuming, expensive, and often delays the obtainment of employment for military spouses.

Virginia is committed to strengthening support to military personnel, veterans and military families in the Commonwealth, and as a demonstration of our commitment Governor McAuliffe was one of the first Governors in the nation to sign the *State Pledge to Support Military Spouse Teachers* (enclosed).

The pledge asked states to commit to supporting military spouse teachers by taking at least one of the following actions:

- Accept current certification from other states as meeting requirements for licensure
- Establish a special temporary license for military spouse teachers
- Waive or significantly reduce application, certification, and licensure fees
- Expedite application and adjudication processes
- Provide a grace period from content and pedagogy teaching assessments

Virginia has already met most of the pledge commitments and will take steps to exceed it in our effort to support military families.

- The Board of Education's *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* provide for reciprocity for individuals seeking licensure. There are three pathways for which reciprocity is offered for all individuals (including military spouses):
 - Completion of an accredited teacher preparation program in another state
 - National Board Certification
 - Holding a current, valid out-of-state License (no deficiencies)
- If one of the three scenarios above is met, an individual may receive a teaching license in Virginia. Individuals are still subject to the conditions for licensure ([8VAC20-22-40](#)) such as CPR certification, child abuse/neglect training, and technology standards, etc.
- If individuals hold a valid license and have three years of teaching experience, they are exempt from the required assessments. The assessments depend on the area of endorsement (more information is available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/prof_teacher_assessment.pdf).
- Further, if an individual (including military spouses) has no teaching experience but holds a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university and meets a content area requirement, school divisions may hire the individual with a provisional license (which gives the individual three years to complete the required coursework - 15 credits).
- While the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) does not specifically have an application waiver program for military spouses, there is a reduction in cost for those applying with a Virginia address (from \$75 to \$50 for an application), and allows time saving options such as submitting photocopies of state certificates and test scores rather than official copies.
- Further, by creating a new ombudsman staff position at VDOE, military families will have a one-stop resource to guide them in the licensure process, and can serve to expedite the application process.

Supporting Service Members

HB 261 (Yancey) of the 2016 General Assembly provides that the Board of Education “*shall provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any former member of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Virginia National Guard who has received an honorable discharge and has the appropriate level of experience or training but does not meet the requirements for a renewable license*” (notwithstanding any provision of the law to the contrary).

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § **22.1-298.1** of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ **22.1-298.1**. Regulations governing licensure.

A. As used in this section:

"Alternate route to licensure" means a nontraditional route to teacher licensure available to individuals who meet the criteria specified in the regulations issued by the Board of Education.

"Industry certification credential" means an active career and technical education credential that is earned by successfully completing a Board of Education-approved industry certification examination, being issued a professional license in the Commonwealth, or successfully completing an occupational competency examination.

"Licensure by reciprocity" means a process used to issue a license to an individual coming into the Commonwealth from another state when that individual meets certain conditions specified in the Board of Education's regulations.

"Professional teacher's assessment" means those tests mandated for licensure as prescribed by the Board of Education.

"Provisional license" means a nonrenewable license issued by the Board of Education for a specified period of time, not to exceed three years, to an individual who may be employed by a school division in the Commonwealth and who generally meets the requirements specified in the Board of Education's regulations for licensure, but who may need to take additional coursework or pass additional assessments to be fully licensed with a renewable license.

"Renewable license" means a license issued by the Board of Education for five years to an individual who meets the requirements specified in the Board of Education's regulations.

B. The Board of Education shall prescribe, by regulation, the requirements for the licensure of teachers and other school personnel required to hold a license. Such regulations shall include requirements for the denial, suspension, cancellation, revocation, and reinstatement of licensure. The Board of Education shall revoke the license of any person for whom it has received a notice of dismissal or resignation pursuant to subsection F of § **22.1-313** and, in the case of a person who is the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect, after all rights to any appeal provided by § **63.2-1526** have been exhausted. Regardless of the authority of any other agency of the Commonwealth to approve educational programs, only the Board of Education shall have the authority to license teachers to be regularly employed by school boards, including those teachers employed to provide nursing education.

The Board of Education shall prescribe by regulation the licensure requirements for teachers who teach only online courses, as defined in § **22.1-212.23**. Such license shall be valid only for teaching online courses. Teachers who hold a five-year renewable license issued by the Board of Education may teach online courses for which they are properly endorsed.

C. The Board of Education's regulations shall include requirements that a person seeking initial licensure:

1. Complete professional assessments as prescribed by the Board of Education;
2. Complete study in attention deficit disorder;
3. Complete study in gifted education, including the use of multiple criteria to identify gifted students; and
4. Complete study in methods of improving communication between schools and families and ways of increasing family involvement in student learning at home and at school.

D. In addition, such regulations shall include requirements that:

1. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license demonstrate proficiency in the use of educational technology for instruction;
2. Every person seeking initial licensure and persons seeking licensure renewal as teachers who have not completed such study shall complete study in child abuse recognition and intervention in accordance with curriculum guidelines developed by the Board of Education in consultation with the Department of Social Services that are relevant to the specific teacher licensure routes;
3. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall receive professional development in instructional methods tailored to promote student academic progress and effective preparation for the Standards of Learning end-of-course and end-of-grade assessments;
4. Every person seeking renewal of a license shall complete all renewal requirements, including professional development in a manner prescribed by the Board, except that no person seeking renewal of a license shall be required to satisfy any such requirement by completing coursework and earning credit at an institution of higher education;
5. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall provide evidence of completion of certification or training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators. The certification or training program shall be based on the current national evidence-based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator, such as a program developed by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. The Board shall provide a waiver for this requirement for any person with a disability whose disability prohibits such person from completing the certification or training;
6. Every person seeking licensure with an endorsement as a teacher of the blind and visually impaired shall demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing Braille; and

7. Every teacher seeking an initial license in the Commonwealth with an endorsement in the area of career and technical education shall have an industry certification credential in the area in which the teacher seeks endorsement. If a teacher seeking an initial license in the Commonwealth has not attained an industry certification credential in the area in which the teacher seeks endorsement, the Board may, upon request of the employing school division or educational agency, issue the teacher a provisional license to allow time for the teacher to attain such credential.

E. The Board's regulations shall require that initial licensure for principals and assistant principals be contingent upon passage of an assessment as prescribed by the Board.

F. The Board shall establish criteria in its regulations to effectuate the substitution of experiential learning for coursework for those persons seeking initial licensure through an alternate route as defined in Board regulations.

G. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board *(i)* may provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, pursuant to subdivision D 7 or to any person who does not meet the requirements of this section or any other requirement for licensure imposed by law *and (ii) shall provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any former member of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Virginia National Guard who has received an honorable discharge and has the appropriate level of experience or training but does not meet the requirements for a renewable license.*

H. The Board's licensure regulations shall also provide for licensure by reciprocity:

1. With comparable endorsement areas for those individuals holding a valid out-of-state teaching license and national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a nationally recognized certification program approved by the Board of Education. The application for such individuals shall require evidence of such valid licensure and national certification and shall not require official student transcripts;

2. For individuals who have obtained a valid out-of-state license, with full credentials and without deficiencies, that is in force at the time the application for a Virginia license is received by the Department of Education. The individual must establish a file in the Department of Education by submitting a complete application packet, which shall include official student transcripts. An assessment of basic skills as provided in § **22.1-298.2** and service requirements shall not be imposed for these licensed individuals; however, other licensing assessments, as prescribed by the Board of Education, shall be required; and

3. The Board may include other provisions for reciprocity in its regulations.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Terence R. McAuliffe
Governor

April 21, 2016

Dr. Jill Biden
Second Lady of the United States
Office of the Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Dr. Biden:

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to helping military families who serve our nation. Virginia is also committed to strengthening support to military personnel, veterans and military families in the Commonwealth, and I am proud to join governors across the country in signing the enclosed *State Pledge to Support Military Spouse Teachers*.

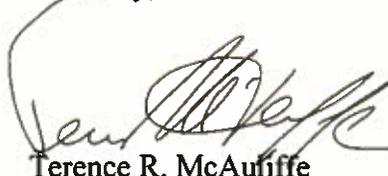
Members of the military and their families make sacrifices of many kinds for our country throughout their service. Joining Forces and your efforts to garner states' support for this pledge will help these families by easing the transition for military spouse teachers, and will help our schools recruit great teachers for our Virginia students. I am pleased to report that Virginia has already met most of the pledge commitments in our effort to support military families. Thanks to the reciprocity extended by the Virginia Board of Education, qualified teachers coming here due to a military move are able to easily obtain a Virginia teaching license. The Board also has streamlined significantly the application process by keeping application fees very low, and adopting time-saving options to ease the administrative burden on transitioning teachers.

I am also pleased to report that Virginia will go beyond the initiatives listed in the pledge, in our mission to make the Commonwealth the best state in the nation for military families. In addition to creating an online hub of school resources for military families, the Virginia Department of Education is creating a new ombudsman position for military family support. This position will provide direct assistance to military families and school counselors across the state, including military spouse teachers seeking to work in Virginia's public schools. These two new initiatives will greatly enhance Virginia's support of military students, teachers and families in the Commonwealth.

Dr. Jill Biden
Page Two
April 21, 2016

Together, these initiatives help to provide clear pathways for military spouse teachers to live, work, and thrive in the Commonwealth. Virginia is honored to participate in the Joining Forces initiative, and we commend your ongoing dedication to expanding opportunities for and supporting military families.

Sincerely,

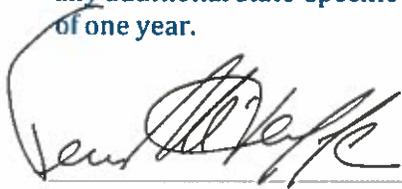
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terence R. McAuliffe", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Terence R. McAuliffe

State Pledge to Support Military Spouse Teachers

Due to the widely varying requirements for teacher certification and licensure across states, the process for a licensed teacher to attain certification and licensure in a new state may require extensive documentation and additional testing and coursework. This process is time-consuming, expensive, and often delays the obtainment of employment for military spouses who are expected to accomplish these requirements every two to three years due to military-directed moves. We recognize the need to act now to enable military spouse teachers to efficiently attain certification and licensure and obtain employment following a military move. Today our state pledges to support military spouse teachers and the financial well-being of military families by taking action to accomplish one or more of the following in our state:

- *Accept current certification from other states as meeting requirements for licensure.* This measure would allow a state board or regulator to recognize active certification from another state as being equivalent to a certification issued in their own state, to accommodate gaps in employment for military spouses that have met certification and licensure requirements in another state.
- *Establish a special temporary license for military spouse teachers.* This temporary license should last the duration of the average military assignment—about three years—and be based upon acceptance of an existing certification and the prerequisite requirements fulfilled to have obtained that certification.
- *Waive or significantly reduce application, certification, and licensure fees* to alleviate the financial burden associated with obtaining certification and licensure in a new state.
- *Expedite application and adjudication processes* by allowing any or all of the following:
 - Permit the licensing board to grant a license based on an application certified by affidavit as being accurate and that verification documentation has been requested;
 - Provide the director of the overseeing agency with authority to approve applications on behalf of the licensing board;
 - Implement time saving options, such as submitting photocopies of state certificates and test scores, and allowing student copies of official transcripts to be submitted in unopened mailers; and
 - Establish a process for flagging applications from military spouse teachers and establishing deadlines for completing their adjudication.
- *Provide a grace period from content and pedagogy teaching assessments.* This would allow a military spouse with a current certification from another state to delay taking any additional state-specific content or pedagogy teaching assessments for a minimum of one year.



Governor Terry McAuliffe, Virginia

4/21/16

Date