

SENATE BILL 2717

By Gresham

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to licensure.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-108(c), is amended by adding the following language as a new subdivision:

(7)

(A) When issuing a license to teach in the public schools to an individual who possesses an active teaching license in another state, the state board of education must issue a teaching license that is equivalent to the teaching license the individual possesses in the other state, if that state has a reciprocal agreement with the state board of education pursuant to § 49-5-109.

(B) If an individual applies for a supervisor's or principal's license, and the individual possesses an active supervisor's or principal's license in another state that has entered into a reciprocal agreement with the state board pursuant to § 49-5-109, the department must issue the individual a supervisor's or principal's license that is equivalent to the license the individual held in the other state, provided that, the individual has served as a supervisor or principal for not less than one (1) school year in the other state.

(C) When issuing a supervisor's, principal's, or public school teacher's license to an individual who is a military spouse and holds an active supervisor's, principal's, or public school teacher's license in another state, the department must issue a supervisor's, principal's, or public school teacher's license that is

equivalent to the license the individual possesses in the other state upon receiving documentation from the individual of active military dependent status.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-108(c)(6)(A), is amended by deleting the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

(A) At the time of the application for an initial license, the supervisor, principal, or public school teacher possessed an active practitioner license, or the equivalent, in a state that has a reciprocal agreement with the state board of education pursuant to § 49-5-109.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-108(c)(6)(C), is amended by deleting the subdivision and substituting instead the following:

(C) The supervisor, principal, or public school teacher earned an overall performance effectiveness level of "at expectations," "above expectations," or "significantly above expectations" as provided in the evaluation guidelines adopted by the state board of education pursuant to § 49-1-302 in each of the first two (2) years immediately following the issuance of the individual's initial license.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-108(d), is amended by adding the following language as a new subdivision:

(3)

(A) The state board of education must approve alternative teacher endorsement and licensure pathways for current and prospective educators. The pathways must include pathways for the addition of endorsement areas for current educators, alignment with other professional licenses and certifications, and exceptions to standard licensure requirements for advanced degrees and professional experience the state board of education deems sufficient to ensure the quality of the educator.

(B)

(i) The state board of education must approve a process for an LEA or for two (2) or more LEAs working together to establish a district

teacher training program for the purpose of recommending current and prospective educators for additional endorsements or an initial license under subdivision (d)(3)(A).

(ii) The state board shall establish the minimum educational requirements needed for current and prospective educators to participate in district teacher training programs. The minimum educational standards must include the ability for current educators to add endorsement areas, alignment with other professional licenses and certifications, and exceptions to standard licensure requirements for certain advanced degrees and professional experience that the board deems sufficient to ensure the quality of the educator.

(iii) The training program established by this subdivision (d)(3)(B) must certify that the educational requirements established by the state board for the additional endorsement or initial license have been met by the current or prospective educator. The process described in this subdivision (d)(3)(B) is in addition to any process already established by the state board and allows current and prospective educators to gain credit toward additional endorsements or initial licensure through online conferences, seminars, workshops, or collaborative learning experiences, including micro-credential courses.

(iv) A current or prospective educator seeking an additional endorsement or initial license through a district teacher training program established under this subdivision (d)(3)(B) is not required to take an assessment or enroll in a teacher preparation program to receive the additional endorsement or initial license.

(v) The department of education shall create a process specifically for reviewing district teacher training programs under this subdivision (d)(3)(B).

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-5-101(e), is amended by designating the existing language as subdivision (1) and adding the following language as a new subdivision (2):

(2) This subsection (e) does not apply to a license being issued through an alternative licensure pathway established by the state board of education pursuant to § 49-5-108(d)(3).

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

(a) Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, the department shall issue a practitioner license to teach in grades nine through twelve (9-12) to any applicant who:

(1) Holds at least a bachelor's degree or a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education that includes at least twenty-four (24) semester hours of credit in the content area in which the applicant will be teaching;

(2) Has at least five (5) years of work experience in the subjects to be taught; and

(3) Enrolls in and successfully completes a teacher preparation program approved by the state board of education. The program must not exceed nine (9) semester hours that are designed to meet the knowledge and skills for teacher preparation.

(b) The practitioner license issued under subsection (a) must bear an endorsement to teach only in a subject area in which the applicant is approved to teach.

Applicants seeking a practitioner license under subsection (a) shall not receive an endorsement to teach a course in which an end-of-course examination is required for students to satisfy graduation requirements established by the state board under § 49-6-6001(a).

(c) The practitioner license issued under subsection (a) is valid for three (3) years and may be renewed once.

(d) To obtain a professional license after holding a practitioner license issued under subsection (a), an educator must:

(1) Have three (3) years of teaching experience;

(2) Have the recommendation of the director of schools, charter school leader, or charter management organization leader; and

(3) Complete professional development requirements established by the state board.

(e) Upon advancement to a professional license under subsection (d), an educator may add endorsements pursuant to licensure rules and policies established by the state board.

SECTION 7. The state board of education is authorized to promulgate rules necessary to effectuate the purpose of this act. The rules must be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

SECTION 8. Sections 2 through 6 shall take effect January 1, 2021, the public welfare requiring it. All remaining sections of this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.