

**REQUEST BY THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO THE
NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF A PILOT PROGRAM TO STUDY
A NEW TEACHER LICENSURE SYSTEM**

Teacher Licensure Pilot Program to be Implemented: The State Board of Education shall develop and implement a pilot program to study a new professional pathways and licensure system to replace the current teacher licensure system. Such a pilot program shall include local public-school districts of varying size and geographic diversity and shall be designed to implemented at the district level beginning in the 2024-25 academic year following a year of preparation during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The pilot shall be authorized for six academic years, including the planning year.

Statement of Need/Policy -- Such a pilot program is needed for the following reasons:

- The current licensure system is overly complicated and difficult for teachers to navigate.
- The current pathways into the teaching profession do not have sufficient flexibility or professional support to meet the needs of teachers from various backgrounds who wish to enter the teaching position.
- There are insufficient numbers of individuals entering into the teaching profession. It is critical for the State to remove unnecessary barriers to entry into the teaching profession.
- Teachers in their first three years are leaving the profession at the rate of 12.7% per year, a number which has been increasing over the last five years. There are ways the State can reduce these high attrition rates. It is essential to the success of public education in the State that beginning teachers receive the professional preparation, professional development and support they need in order to be successful and feel supported so that they will choose to remain in the teaching profession.
- The current licensure system does not allow the flexibility needed to meet incoming teachers “where they are” based on their unique and individual needs.
- Current teacher compensation is not commensurate with that of other professionals who have similar educational attainment. Further, teachers lack opportunities to advance their careers while staying in the profession. These are barriers to teachers entering and remaining in the profession.

Required Elements of the Proposed Pilot -- The pilot program shall include the following elements:

- A series of entry points and transition into the teaching profession, with clear requirements for the different entry points and transitions that allow for advancement, instead of the current system in which all teachers are treated the same based on longevity.
- Pathways for progressively advancing through the different levels of licensure, to achieve continuing or permanent licensure and advanced licenses.
- Advanced teaching, mentor, and teacher leadership roles designed to support and improve classroom instruction.
- Learning tools and structures that are designed or selected to support teachers through the various levels of licensure and professional learning and advancement
- Alternatives methods to assess the competencies of beginning teachers.
- Methods to assess the effectiveness of the new licensure system on student learning.
- Reporting requirements to the General Assembly and State Board on the impact of the pilot.

Additional Items that Need to be in the Pilot Legislation

- The pilot districts shall be exempt from the provisions of Article 17E of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statutes, which mandate that district employ teachers with specific licensures and performance measures, including a licensing exam.
- The State Board, informed by recommendations from PEPSC and DPI, is authorized to create and implement a pilot program that will use different professional entry points, preparation, and professional learning, and license categories than those currently in statute.
- The State Board shall be exempt from rulemaking for the pilot program
- The pilot districts shall be exempt from the State Board's current administrative rules regarding the licensure of teachers.
- The State Board of Education and pilot districts shall be exempt from the current standard teacher pay schedule. Pilot districts will follow the pay schedule outlined by the General Assembly for the pilot plan.
- Additional funds to implement the pilot program, which shall be determined following a fiscal analysis by the Department of Public Instruction.
- The Department of Public Instruction shall report annually to the General Assembly and State Board on the success of the pilot in impacting the attraction and retention of teachers and on student performance.