

Tennessee Educator License Types and Key Terms

Educator License Types

Teacher

There are two types of teaching licenses for individuals seeking academic teaching opportunities in Tennessee schools:

Practitioner: Initial three (3) year license issued to applicants who hold a bachelor's degree, are enrolled in or have completed a preparation program approved by the State Board of Education, and have verified content knowledge as defined in [state board policy](#). An educator may add additional endorsements to a practitioner license. The practitioner license may be renewed once.

Professional: A six (6) year teacher license issued upon completion of an approved educator preparation program and meeting specific licensure expectations and requirements at the practitioner level. An educator may add additional endorsements to a professional license. The professional license is renewable.

Occupational Teacher

There are two types of licenses for individuals seeking occupational teaching opportunities in Tennessee:

Practitioner Occupational: Initial three (3) year license issued to applicants who have met endorsement requirements according to [state board policy](#) and have had content verification provided by the Tennessee department of education. The practitioner occupational license may be renewed once.

Professional Occupational: A six (6) year license issued upon to applicants upon meeting licensure requirements at the practitioner level, completing coursework covering the professional education standards and additional requirements as defined by [state board policy](#). The professional occupational license is renewable.

School Services Personnel

Educators who provide services for students other than instruction (i.e., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, educational interpreter,¹ school speech-language pathologist, speech-language teacher, or school audiologist) should apply for this license type. There are two types of School Service Personnel licenses:

¹ *Educational Interpreter:* Candidates seeking licensure and endorsement as an educational interpreter must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university before a practitioner school service personnel license can be issued. Official transcripts for all universities and colleges attended must be submitted directly from the institution to the office of educator licensure and preparation through an online clearing house or by mail. Candidates must meet the employment standards and assessment requirements of the State Board of Education. Candidates applying for a practitioner school service personnel license as an educational interpreter must also satisfy ONE of the following criteria:

- A current, nationally recognized certification which includes a written examination related to ethics and practice, **or**
- A passing score on the written portion of the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA) and a minimum score of 3.5 of the performance assessment portion of the EIPA.

Practitioner: Initial three (3) year license issued to applicants upon completion of a program approved by the State Board of Education, leading to endorsement as a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, educational interpreter, school speech-language pathologist, speech-language teacher, or school audiologist. Applicants must have also submitted qualifying scores on the state-required licensure assessment. The practitioner school service personnel license may be renewed once. An educator may only add other school service endorsements to this license. The practitioner school service personnel license may be renewed once.

Professional: A six (6) year license issued to applicants upon meeting licensure expectations at the practitioner level, as a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, educational interpreter, school speech-language pathologist, speech-language teacher, or school audiologist. The professional school service personnel license is renewable.

Instructional Leader (Administrator)

There are three types of instructional leader licenses in Tennessee:

Instructional Leader License-Aspiring (ILL-A): Initial three (3) year instructional leader license issued to candidates who are enrolled in an instructional leader preparation program approved by the State Board of Education. This license allows educators to serve as an assistant principal and is not renewable.

Instructional Leader License (ILL): Initial three (3) year license issued to candidates who have completed an instructional leader preparation program approved by the State Board of Education and have submitted a qualifying score on the required licensure assessment. This license allows educators to serve as a principal or assistant principal and is renewable.

Instructional Leader License-Professional (ILL-P): A six (6) year instructional leader license issued to educators who have met licensure expectations for advancement from the ILL. The ILL-P is renewable.

Permit

A school district or public charter school may apply for a permit to hire an applicant for an academic endorsement only if the applicant holds a bachelor's degree. A bachelor's degree is not required for an applicant to teach an occupational endorsement. The school district may renew a permit twice by meeting stated requirements, allowing an educator to serve on a permit for a total of three years. A permit may be issued if the school district or public charter school meets the following requirements:

1. A director of schools or public charter school states intent to employ and indicates the position to be held by the applicant;
2. The school district or public charter school indicates that it is unable to obtain the services of a licensed educator for the type and kind of school in which the vacancy exists; **and**
3. The school district or public charter school identifies and documents a targeted recruitment strategy for the position or shortage area. The strategy may include but is not limited to, partnerships with educator preparation providers, advertisements, or recruitment campaigns.

Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps (JROTC)

Active or retired military personnel seeking to teach JROTC will apply for this license type. The JROTC license is a five (5) year license issued based upon a certification of preparation by the branch of the military approving the teacher placement. The JROTC license does not entitle an individual to teach courses other than those designated as part of the JROTC program, consistent with the requirements of T.C.A. 49-5-108. No other teaching endorsement may be added to a JROTC license. The JROTC license is renewable.

Key Terms

Endorsement: An endorsement indicates the area for which a licensed educator is prepared to provide instruction, leadership, or services in schools and districts. An educator may hold more than one endorsement. To learn more about adding endorsements to licenses, visit the [Add an Endorsement page](#).

Job-embedded: Job-embedded programs allow an individual to serve as a teacher of record in a Tennessee classroom while completing required educator preparation classes. Potential teachers who want to teach in the classroom while also completing their program may do so while holding a job-embedded practitioner license. Educators are encouraged to contact [approved educator preparation providers](#) to verify whether they have a job-embedded program and to learn more about program requirements.

Waiver: A district may apply for a waiver when they would like to have a licensed educator teach a subject area for which they do not have an endorsement. A waiver must be renewed by the district every year. Educators may not directly apply for a waiver and may only hold a waiver for three years.

Out-of-State: Refers to licenses and educator preparation provider recommendations received in a state other than Tennessee.