
Educator Licensure, Policy & Rule

The Background:

Educator licensure, a state function, is designed to ensure that educators meet minimum standards of practice. The current educator licensure policy and process is too complex to effectively serve teachers, students or the public. Currently, Tennessee issues many types of teacher licenses, which is unnecessary and confusing for new teacher candidates.

The proposed item streamlines the current licensure policy while recognizing the role of licensure with respect to other state, district and school level personnel functions. The item reflects changes based on the licensure policy rescinded at the Jan. 31, 2014 meeting of the State Board of Education. The new policy requires that all teachers complete professional development points for the purposes of advancing or renewing an educator license. In addition to earning points based on completion of approved professional development activities, such as attending relevant conferences and completing appropriate coursework, educators may also earn professional development points based on meeting or exceeding performance expectations.

Since the first reading of this item on June 30, 2014, the policy has been adjusted further to include an explanatory paragraph to Appendix B regarding endorsement structure and by inserting Appendix A, which provides detail regarding opportunities to accrue professional development points for licensure renewal. The term 'professional learning credits' has also been changed to 'professional development points' based on feedback from the board and educators. Finally, the only change to the licensure rule was to reinsert language regarding the adjunct license.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends adoption of this item on final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.