



EDUCATOR LICENSURE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Call to Action

Tennessee recognizes the need to have a sufficient supply of excellent educators to meet the needs of the state. The State Board of Education's, [Master Plan 2022-2025](#), includes a specific strategic focus on "Teachers and Leaders" and states as follows:

All schools are staffed with qualified and effective educators.

This focus is derived from the Board's authority (T.C.A. § 49-1-302(a)(5)(A)(i)) to "Adopt rules and policies governing ... the qualifications, requirements and standards of and provide the licenses and certificates for all public school teachers, principals, assistant principals, supervisors and directors of schools."

A key policy lever essential to accomplishing this goal is a coherent and effective licensure system. While Tennessee's current system is well-regarded, there is room for improvement. The State Board of Education (State Board) staff, working with the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), have started the process to identify recommendations that will ensure that the licensure system and policies meet Tennessee's needs.

To ensure the licensure system is reviewed often, the State Board's Executive Director seeks to develop an Educator Licensure Review Committee. The Committee will convene at least annually to examine state law, and State Board rules and policies to highlight areas of strength, while identifying challenges, and potential changes. Recommendations will be made to the Executive Director of the State Board for consideration.

The Committee will represent all regions of the state and include educators, district and state education leaders, and legislators. Through this Committee, educator licensure requirements and related board rules and policies will be discussed alongside issues faced by educators and districts. Convening on a regular cadence to discuss key issues will ensure ongoing reflection with regard to this complex, yet critical, policy issue.

Work to Date

Beginning in Spring 2023, staff from the State Board and TDOE began convening with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) to create a draft vision and guiding principles for educator licensure and to identify key issues within the current system through surveying key stakeholders across the state. Both the Vision and Principles and the key issues will serve as a focus of initial discussions of the Committee.

Key Issues

Early discussions and engagement with stakeholders indicate that there are a few key issues that warrant investigation and potential action in the initial stages of the Committee. These issues include:

- Continued use of the edTPA as a licensure requirement for candidates completing undergraduate and traditional post-baccalaureate preparation programs;
- Evaluation of requirements for occupational licensure and accessibility of licensure pathways for prospective educators transitioning from industry;
- Improvement of communication of more recently developed pathways to licensure; and
- Identification of needs related to restructuring of current endorsements and creation of new endorsements.

If you are interested in being considered for this Committee, please send a statement of interest to Michael Deurlein, Deputy Executive Director of Policy and Research (Michael.J.Deurlein@tn.gov), no later than January 15, 2024.