

## MEMORANDUM

To: Local Superintendents of Education, Officials of Eligible Non-public schools,  
and All Other Education Stakeholders

From: Dr. Cory M. Murphy, Executive Director  
Office of Teaching and Leading

Date: Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Subject: Division of Educator Licensure 2020 – 2021 Compendium of Updates and Reminders

### **New Upcoming Requirements for Obtaining Licensure via “Reciprocity”**

In accordance with Senate Bill 2267, new requirements related to licensure via “Reciprocity” will become effective on July 1, 2021.

- **New Reciprocity requirements** outlined under Senate Bill 2267 **will become effective** and shall be in force **on and after July 1, 2021.**
- Please remain mindful that **licensure applications that were/are submitted to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure prior to the July 1, 2021 effective date, are subject to current Reciprocity licensure requirements that remain in effect until June 30, 2021.**
- According to the amended law related to licensure via “Reciprocity” new licensure requirements are as follows:
  - **The department shall grant a standard five-year license to any individual who possesses a valid standard license from another state within a period of twenty-one (21) days from the date of a completed application. The issuance of a license by reciprocity to a military-trained applicant, military spouse or person who establishes residence in this state shall be subject to the provisions of Section 73-50-1 394 or 73-50-2, as applicable.**
- The new requirements that take effect on July 1, 2021, precludes the language found in the current law that requires an applicant to meet Mississippi’s minimum requirements or to have met equivalent requirements in another state.
- The new requirements also preclude the Two-Year Reciprocity licensure option.

**Application Process Now Includes Requirement for Submission of Verification of an Applicant's Lawful Presence in the United States of America**

On December 17, 2020, the Mississippi State Board of Education granted approval to amend the current licensure application process to include procedures for verifying an applicant's lawful presence in the United States.

Effective with applications received July 1, 2021, and thereafter, Citizens of the United States are required to submit appropriate documentation for verification once during their next most immediate licensure application submission. Non-US citizens are required to submit appropriate documentation for verification with each licensure application submission, or when their United States Citizenship and Immigration Services documents expire, whichever comes first. Licensure application(s) shall not be processed if the applicant fails to answer the request for documentation required for verification of lawful presence in the United States.

Any initial or renewable license issued to an applicant who is not a United States citizen shall expire in accordance with the appropriate validity date required by a particular license type but, shall not exceed the expiration date of the applicant's authorized stay in the United States, whichever is the lesser period of time. A change in a Non-US citizen's lawful presence status will affect his/her ability to receive or continue to hold a Mississippi educator license.

It shall be the responsibility of the prospective or practicing educator to obtain and provide the MDE with required documentation regarding his/her United States citizenship or lawful presence status. Required forms and additional information found therein, can be accessed via the following web link: [<https://www.mdek12.org/OEL/Forms>].

**2021 COVID-19 License Extension**

On February 25, 2021, the State Board of Education (SBE) granted approval to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure to suspend the renewal requirements for those licenses that are set to expire on June 30, 2021, and grant a one-year extension for all license types with a current valid expiration date of June 30, 2021. Qualifying licenses are now dated to expire June 30, 2022. Beginning July 1, 2022, and thereafter, applicants for licensure renewal shall meet all requirements in effect on the date the complete application is received in the MDE Division of Educator Licensure. The extension does not represent a waiver of requirements rather, the SBE has granted additional time for meeting requirements for licensure renewal or conversion, as applicable. **No application submission is required as all licenses bearing an expiration date of June 30, 2021, has been automatically extended.**

**Suspension of Educator Preparation Program Admission and Licensure Assessments**

On March 26, 2020, during its Special Called Meeting, the Mississippi State Board of Education granted approval to the MDE to suspend the educator preparation program entry testing criterion only, for all candidates seeking admission to a Mississippi State Board of Education approved traditional or nontraditional educator preparation program on or before December 31, 2021.

In addition, the MDE was granted approval to suspend the licensure testing criterion only, for all complete applications received in the MDE Division of Educator Licensure on or before December 31, 2021, for Five-Year Standard Licenses sought by way of the completion of an approved traditional or nontraditional educator or administrator preparation program as defined by the Mississippi State Board of Education. Please note that all other requirements remain in effect.

### **Algebra I and Geometry Subject Area Licensure Assessments Now Available for Adding a Supplemental Endorsement**

Effective April 20, 2020, the state of Mississippi adopted the Algebra I test code 5162 and Geometry test code 5163 Praxis Subject Area Assessments. The qualifying passing scores of 148 represents Mississippi's required score for the Algebra I, test code 5162 and qualifying passing score of 139 represents the required score for Geometry, test code 5163. Test preparation materials may be accessed via the following web links: [<https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5162>] and [<https://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5163>]. A passing qualifying score from the Algebra I assessment will be used as one option for adding an Algebra I supplemental endorsement to a standard five (5) year or provisional alternate route three (3) year license. A passing qualifying score from the Geometry assessment will be used as one option for adding a Geometry supplemental endorsement to a standard five (5) year or provisional alternate route (3) year license.

### **Licensure Preparation and Other Programs Completed Outside the State of Mississippi**

On January 21, 2021, at its regular meeting, the Mississippi State Board of Education granted approval, as a necessary protection, to require that all Mississippi's prospective and practicing educators, administrators, and supplemental service providers seeking to obtain initial licensure in the state of Mississippi by way of completion of a licensure-track program outside of Mississippi, shall first be licensed in the state where the preparation occurred. Implementation criteria are as follows:

- Those prospective and practicing educators, administrators, and supplemental service providers that were unconditionally admitted to and actively enrolled in a licensure-track educator, administrator, or supplemental service provider preparation program outside of Mississippi on or before February 22, 2021, shall have until June 30, 2023, to submit a complete application with all supporting documentation to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure in order to be considered for initial licensure by way of completion of a preparation program outside of the state of Mississippi. Effective July 1, 2023, and thereafter, the applicant shall adhere to all guidelines in effect on the date the complete application is received by the MDE. This is to serve as a good faith effort to allow as many candidates as possible, a window of time for program completion and licensure application submission to potentially obtain a Mississippi license prior to being subject to the newly established policy.
- Effective February 22, 2021, all other prospective and practicing educators, administrators, and supplemental service providers that were not unconditionally admitted to and actively enrolled in a licensure-track educator, administrator, or supplemental service provider preparation program outside of Mississippi on or before February 22, 2021, shall first be licensed in the state where the preparation occurred in order to be considered for initial licensure in the state of Mississippi by way of completion of a program outside of Mississippi. Upon obtaining the out-of-state license, the candidate shall submit a complete application with required supporting documentation to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure for the purpose of determining eligibility to obtain a Mississippi license via Reciprocity guidelines in effect on the date the complete application is received by the MDE.
- Note of Clarification: Those prospective and practicing educators, administrators, and supplemental service providers that completed a licensure-track educator, administrator, or supplemental service provider preparation program outside of Mississippi before

February 22, 2021, shall have until December 31, 2021, to submit a complete application with all supporting documentation to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure in order to be considered for initial licensure by way of completion of a preparation program outside of the state of Mississippi. Effective January 1, 2022, and thereafter, the applicant shall adhere to all guidelines in effect on the date the complete application is received by the MDE.

### **Prospective District Superintendent of Education Qualifications**

On February 25, 2021, the State Board of Education (SBE) granted approval to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure to temporarily allow prospective Mississippi superintendents of education meeting all other qualifications except the accountability rating documentation requirement, to be deemed eligible to receive an initial District Superintendent License by way of the State Board of Education approved Alternative Qualifications for Prospective District Superintendent of Education to begin practicing in that role should a Mississippi local School Board approves the appointment of the candidate. Furthermore, the MDE requested and received approval to grant a one-time, one-year extension to a three (3) year initial alternative District Superintendent License, at the point of license expiration, for holders of this license currently serving in a Mississippi local school district as Superintendent of Education. The one-time, one-year extension is subject to the request being made by the local School Board by which the initial license request was made and granted.

### **Licensure Application Submission and Expiration**

Effective July 1, 2020, the licensure application expiration timeframe was adjusted from thirty (30) days to one-hundred eighty (180) days from the date it is received, and date stamped in the MDE Division of Educator Licensure. This adjustment allows applicants more time to submit additional supporting documentation, if applicable, before being required to submit a new application. The MDE Division of Educator Licensure cannot process a request for a license without receipt of an official completed licensure application being submitted by the prospective or practicing educator.

Please remain mindful that, the effective date of a licensure endorsement is based on the date the final required supporting document is received, and date stamped in the MDE Division of Educator Licensure. Therefore, all required supporting documents for the requested license must be submitted to avoid a delay in application processing. Select supporting documents can be uploaded directly into the applicant's Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS) account. Official sealed copies of the applicant's transcript(s) and all pages of the official score report(s) must be submitted electronically directly from the respective college/university and administering testing company or mailed to the Mississippi Department of Education, Division of Educator Licensure, P.O. Box 771, Jackson, MS 39205-0771.

### **Academic Transcript Submission**

The Division of Educator Licensure continues to accept electronic academic transcripts that are submitted to the Division directly through an official transcript transmission service provider or directly from the Office of the Registrar at an institution of higher education. Electronic academic transcripts can now be submitted directly from any college or university Office of the Registrar by using the following email address: **[transcript@mdek12.org]**. Electronic transcript submission is the fastest, most secure way to deliver your academic transcript to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure. **Please note that academic transcripts submitted to any other MDE email inbox will not be processed** and applicants should only use the above designated email address to avoid delay of receipt of transcript and application processing. Academic transcripts that are

uploaded to an applicant's Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS) account will not be accepted for licensure review and processing. Academic transcripts by any party other than an official transcript transmission service provider or the college/university registrar's office shall not be considered official and will not be processed. All licensure questions should be sent to the **[teachersupport@mdek12.org]** email inbox.

For efficient document-to-applicant academic transcript verification, please request that the institution include the following information as part of the applicant's official transcript: 1) first and last name as it appears in the applicant's ELMS account, 2) date of birth, and 3) the last four digits of applicant's social security number.

### **Process for Submission of Other Licensure Application Supporting Documentation**

Applicants may now scan and submit documents to the MDE Division of Educator Licensure using their smartphone. Supporting documentation may be submitted to the Division online through your Educator Licensure Management System (ELMS) account or via postal mail. All original documents to be used as part of the licensure application review process must be scanned, and then uploaded to your ELMS account as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. There are several free software applications available for download that are compatible with most smartphone models. These apps allow you to use the camera on your cellular device to capture multi-page documents and turn them into PDF files to upload as part of a licensure application. You can determine what downloadable smartphone applications are available on or compatible with your telephone device by searching for "Document Scanning Applications" in your browser. When capturing a photograph of the document to be submitted, please be sure to remove any content and/or extra spacing that is not part of the document. This should be done prior to document upload to not obstruct access to information pertinent to reviewing and processing your licensure request.

Test Score Reports and official transcripts uploaded to your ELMS account will not be accepted. Official transcripts must be submitted electronically directly from the college/university **[transcript@mdek12.org]** and test score reports should be sent directly from the appropriate testing company. In addition, documentation submitted through the teacher support email inbox or any other MDE email inbox shall not be accepted for licensure application review.

### **Obtaining and maintaining the Special Non-Renewable License for Prospective Non-Traditional Teacher Preparation Program Completers**

Effective with Special Non-Renewable License for Prospective Non-Traditional Teacher Preparation Program Completers issued for the 2020-2021 school year and thereafter, during the school year the valid special, non-renewable license is issued, the employing Mississippi local school district or eligible nonpublic school shall provide the special, non-renewable license holder:

- a) Appropriate ongoing activities that lead to obtaining unconditional admission to a Mississippi State Board of Education approved non-traditional teacher preparation program as one criterion for the issuance of Year Two license; **and**
- b) High-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused; **and**
- c) Intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support or teacher mentoring with a fully certified teacher.

The employing local school district or eligible nonpublic school must submit documentation indicating that the special, non-renewable license holder is making sufficient progress toward the completion of requirements for obtaining full state certification to be granted the year two (2) or year

three (3) special, non-renewable license. To obtain information related to the full requirements regarding the respective special, non-renewable license types, you may access the Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 via the following web link: [<https://www.mdek12.org/licensure>].

### **Renewal of a Standard Educator License**

Please encourage educators to engage in professional learning throughout the five-year validity of the current license renewal cycle indicated on the Mississippi issued educator's license. When seeking to engage in professional learning opportunities intended for improving practice, one suggestion would be to pursue those opportunities that target areas for growth as identified using the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System.

When determining whether professional learning opportunities completed by an educator for the purpose of licensure renewal is acceptable, it is our practice to apply the following questions:

- How does the selected professional learning opportunity improve the teacher's knowledge and skills related to the role(s) in which he/she is serving? In essence, how will the professional learning opportunity improve teaching practice that will ultimately yield better student learning outcomes?
- How will the professional learning activity improve and sustain the professional growth of teachers?

Please be mindful that the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) reserves the right and authority to question the authenticity, refuse to accept, and/or request additional documents regarding any documentation submitted to the Division of Educator Licensure for the purposes of initial licensure or renewal.

As always, we appreciate your assistance with disseminating and orally communicating the contents of this memorandum to all prospective and practicing educators. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Educator Licensure team via telephone at (601) 359-3483. We value and appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

c: Dr. Paula A. Vanderford