

OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Item
Consent Agenda
September 28, 2023

OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING
DIVISION OF EDUCATOR LICENSURE

- I. Approval of a temporary rule and to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise Miss. Admin. Code 7 – 4: Part 4: *Licensure Guidelines K-12*, to amend criteria regarding educator licensure preparation and other programs completed outside the state of Mississippi

Background Information: The Office of Teaching and Leading, Division of Educator Licensure continues to review all guidelines pertaining to the issuance, renewal, and reinstatement of an educator license to ensure that all requirements remain relevant to the contextual framework of present day. On January 21, 2021, the State Board of Education granted approval, as a necessary protection for all Mississippi's prospective and practicing educators seeking to obtain initial licensure in the state of Mississippi by way of completion of a program outside of Mississippi, to require that such candidates shall first be licensed in the state where the preparation occurred. Upon obtaining the out-of-state license, the candidate shall submit an 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.

While the implementation of this policy has helped to improve the Mississippi resident's experience with institutions outside of Mississippi over the past two years, an unintended consequence is the negative impact it is posing for local school districts that recruit and employ educator preparation program completers coming to Mississippi from another state attempting to use their CAEP accredited/state approved program alone. The policy as currently written, is further hampering the state's ability to address the shortage long faced not only in teaching fields but also in other hard-to-staff supplemental service provider areas such as Professional School Counseling among others.

On September 14, 2023, during a special-called meeting, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development granted approval to amend requirements related to licensure-track preparation and other programs completed outside the state of Mississippi.

The temporary rule and final action are necessary to implement the policy revisions immediately upon its filing with the Secretary of State in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-3.113(2)(b)(ii). See also Miss. Code Ann. § 25-43-3.108. For a

rule to become effective immediately upon its filing, the Board is required to make a finding that the rule only confers a benefit or removes a restriction on the public or some segment thereof.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Document Submission

All applications and supporting documentation must be submitted electronically through the educator's assigned Mississippi Educator Career Continuum Archive system (MECCA) account. No documents should be submitted via postal mail. Licenses will be valid from the day the completed application packet is received and validated by the Division of Educator Licensure. A completed application packet includes the licensure application and all supporting documentation required for your requested license type. Applications that are submitted without supporting documents will be considered incomplete and the educator will be emailed a "requirements" letter stating which documents are needed to process the licensure request. Please review the Licensure Application Checklist to identify the documents required for obtaining licensure in your desired area of certification: <https://www.mdek12.org/OEL/Licensure-Application-Checklist>.

Transcripts must be submitted electronically directly from the institution and licensure test score reports directly from the appropriate testing company. All original documents to be used as part of the licensure application review process must be scanned and then uploaded to your MECCA system account as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, captured using the camera on your cellular device, or by utilizing free software applications available for download that are compatible with most smartphone models. 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.

All documents submitted to the Division of Educator Licensure become the property of the Mississippi Department of Education and will not be returned to the applicant, unless otherwise stated, nor will the Department provide copies of the documents to the applicant or third parties. Only the following documents will be duplicated and returned to the applicant if submission is required: Original – Out-of-state license, Professional Association Card, Marriage License, Birth Certificate, and Licensure Test Score Report. It is the responsibility of the educator to obtain copies of documents prior to submission to the Division of Educator Licensure.

SPECIAL NOTE

A grade of "C" or higher must be obtained on all coursework taken for renewal of license, reinstatement of license or the adding of supplemental endorsements. This includes all coursework outlined on planned programs required to convert a special license to a standard license.

Acceptable Degrees or Coursework for Licensure

The Division of Educator Licensure accepts degrees or coursework from any nationally or regionally accredited institution. An institution's accreditation status can be verified using the United States Department of Education website (<https://www.ed.gov/accreditation>) or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation website (<https://www.chea.org/>). Section 37-3-2 of the Mississippi Code authorizes the Certification Commission and State Board of Education to approve all educator preparation programs offered by Mississippi-based educator preparation providers for any license-type offered in Mississippi. The Commission does not approve programs completed in other states.

Licensure Preparation and Other Programs Completed Outside the State of Mississippi

Prospective and practicing educators seeking to obtain initial licensure in the state of Mississippi by way of completion of a traditional state approved or nationally accredited licensure-track teacher, administrator, certain supplemental service provider, and supplemental endorsement preparation program from a regionally/nationally accredited institution of higher education program outside of Mississippi, shall first obtain Institutional Program Verification (IPV) from the educator preparation provider be licensed in the state where the preparation occurred. Upon obtaining Institutional Program Verification (IPV) using the form established by the MDE Division of Educator Licensure the out-of-state license, the candidate shall submit an 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. Educators that complete a nontraditional licensure-track program outside of Mississippi shall first be licensed in another state and seek to obtain a Mississippi license via Reciprocity guidelines in effect on the date the complete application and required supporting documentation is received by the MDE.