

50-State Survey on Teacher Licensure Model Tiered Structures

Prepared for the Legislative Study Group on Educator Licensure created under Laws 2016, chapter 189, article 24, section 24, by Kevin R. Behr, Assistant Revisor of Statutes

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At the request of the Study Group, I have conducted a survey of each of the 50 states' teacher licensure structures, and have compiled a spreadsheet with my findings. Below is a more detailed summary of tiered licensure structures from eight states that could serve as models—in one form or another—for the Study Group to begin crafting a tiered licensure structure for Minnesota. Colorado and Oregon stand out, in particular, as strong candidates. Not only do these states have comprehensive tiered structures that closely resemble the structure proposed by the Board of Teaching, their statutes and rules are drafted in clear and concise language and are presented in a fairly easy-to-use way.

The below summary includes information about the types of licenses issued in each state, the agency that issues the licenses, whether administrators have a similar tiered licensure structure, and which agency handles disciplinary actions against teachers and administrators.

Colorado

The Colorado Department of Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Alternative teacher license: issued to a candidate enrolled in an alternative teacher preparation program; valid for up to two years
- Initial teacher license: issued to a candidate who has completed teacher prep; valid for three years; renewable one time for an additional three years to complete requirements for a professional teacher license
- Professional teacher license: issued to a candidate who holds an initial teacher license and has completed a school district's teacher induction program; valid for five years; unlimited renewal
- Master certificate: issued to a candidate who has made "outstanding achievements in and contributions to education" and has either obtained national board certification or has submitted a master certification

portfolio detailing advanced competencies and contributions to education; valid for five years; unlimited renewal

See, Colorado Revised Statutes Annotated § 22-60.5-201. Colorado similarly licenses special services providers, principals, and administrators on this tiered system, including initial and professional licenses and optional master certification. See, C.R.S.A. §§ 22-60.5-210; and 22-60.5-301 to 309.5. Full detail of the types and requirements for teacher and administrator licenses available can be found at 1 Colo. Code Regs. 301-37:2260.5-R-2.00 to -3.12.

Although they are not explicitly tied to any of the tiers, Colorado does provide various authorizations on the “flexibility” side of the structure, including adjunct instructor, emergency, temporary educator eligibility, substitute, interim, military spouse, exchange educator interim, and career and technical education, among others. See, C.R.S.A. § 22-60.5-111.

The Department of Education has authority to suspend or revoke a teaching license, and the grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are detailed in C.R.S.A. § § 22.60.5-107 and 108.

Delaware

The Delaware Department of Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Initial License: issued to a candidate who has completed a teacher preparation program or one of four alternative routes to licensure; valid for three years; nonrenewable but can be extended under certain circumstances
- Continuing License: issued to a candidate holding an initial license and who has completed professional development and mentoring activities; valid for five years; unlimited renewal
- Advanced License: issued to a candidate holding a continuing license and who has received national board certification; valid for up to 10 years

See, 14 Delaware Code §§ 1210 to 1214.

Additionally, each license must be accompanied by a certificate defining the area in which the teacher may teach, such as elementary teacher (K-6), middle level science teacher (6-8), and technology education teacher (6-12), among many others. See 14

Delaware Administrative Code §§ 1505 to 1594. Emergency certificates are available for teachers hired to teach outside their content area. See *id.* at § 1506. School service providers, administrators, and principals are not licensed on a tiered structure, but must obtain standard certificates for their respective positions. See *id.* at §§ 1580 to 1595.

The Secretary of the Department of Education has sole authority to suspend or revoke a teaching license, and all grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are detailed in 14 Delaware Code § 1218.

Maine

The Maine Department of Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Provisional Certificate: initial certification issued to a candidate who has completed teacher preparation or one of three alternate pathways to certification; valid for two years; renewable only under certain circumstances
- Professional Certificate: standard certification issued to a candidate with a provisional certificate and who meets the requirements of one of eight optional tracks, mostly dependent on teaching experience; valid for five years with unlimited renewal
- Master Certificate: advanced certification issued to a candidate with a professional certificate, national board certification, and a positive recommendation for advanced certification; valid for five years with unlimited renewal

See, 05-071 Code of Maine Rules Ch. 115, Pt. I § 5. Each license must be accompanied by an appropriate endorsement for grade and subject area. See *id.* at Pt. II § 1.

Flexible, alternative pathways to licensure include the issuance of: one-year conditional certificates to candidates hired by a district but who may be missing some licensure requirements; one-year targeted need certificates to candidates who are ineligible for certification but are filling a shortage need; and transitional endorsements to candidates who hold a provisional or professional certificate but are missing requirements for additional endorsements. See *id.* at Pt. I §§ 4.2.C and 5.

School administrators, including superintendents, principals, curriculum coordinators, and directors of adult and community education are not licensed on a tiered

system, but must hold professional administrator certificates, which are valid for five years. *See id.* at § 8.

All disciplinary authority is granted to the Commissioner of Education, and all grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are found in rules. *See id.* at § 14.

For the statutory treatment of this licensing structure, see Maine Revised Statutes title 20-A, §§ 13011 to 13025.

Massachusetts

The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Preliminary License: issued to a candidate who has not completed teacher preparation but has a bachelor's degree and has passed subject matter knowledge tests; valid for five years; nonrenewable
- Initial License: issued to a candidate who has completed in-state teacher preparation or has completed one of four alternate pathways to licensure; valid for five years; renewable for one additional five-year term
- Professional License: issued to a candidate with three years of experience with an initial license and either holds an advanced degree, completes a one-year induction program with a mentor, or has completed additional programming for the specific professional license sought; valid for five years; unlimited renewal

See, 603 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 7.04. *See also*, <http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/educator-effectiveness/licensure/academic-prek-12/teacher/teacher-license-types-and-general-requirements-.html>. The Commissioner is authorized to issue waivers to districts facing critical shortages and great hardships. *See*, 603 Code of Mass. Regs. 7.15(13).

Administrators must obtain licensure through a separate tiered system, which includes preliminary, initial, and professional licenses but with very different experience requirements than teachers. *See id.*, at 7.09.

The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education holds disciplinary authority, and the grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are detailed in 603 Code of Mass. Regs. 7.15(8).

For the statutory treatment of this licensure structure, see Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 71 § 38G.

Nebraska

The Nebraska Department of Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Initial Teaching Certificate: issued to a candidate who has completed a teacher preparation program; valid for five years; renewable under certain circumstances
- Standard Teaching Certificate: issued to a candidate holding an initial certificate with at least two years of teaching experience; valid for five years; unlimited renewable
- Professional Teaching Certificate: issued to a candidate holding a standard certificate with at least two years of teaching experience and has either obtained a master's degree, holds advanced credentials, or has obtained a six-year specialist's certificate or doctorate degree; valid for 10 years; unlimited renewal

See, Nebraska Administrative Rules & Regulations, Title 92, Chapter 21, § 005. Each license must be accompanied by endorsements for grade levels and teaching areas. See *id.* at Chapter 24, § 006. Flexibility options, including permits for alternative program, provisional, career education, postsecondary, state substitute, local substitute, and transitional teaching, are also issued by the Department. See *id.* at Chapter 21, § 005. Administrator certificates are issued on a separate tiered structure including standard and professional administrative certificates. See *id.*, at § 004.

The Professional Practices Commission conducts hearings and makes recommendations regarding violations of standards and practices to the State Board of Education, which has the authority to suspend or revoke a certificate. All grounds and procedures are detailed in Nebraska Admin. R. & Regs., Title 92, Ch. 28.

For the statutory treatment of this licensing structure, see Nebraska Revised Statutes §§ 79-801 to -815.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire's Board of Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Intern License: issued to a candidate who has not completed teacher preparation but who is employed by a school district and is in the process of completing an individual, site-based certification plan; valid for the duration of the development plan
- Beginning Educator Certificate: issued to a candidate who has completed teacher preparation or one of four alternative pathways to licensure and has less than three years of teaching experience; valid for three years and is renewable
- Experienced Educator Certificate: issued to a candidate with at least three years of teaching experience plus two consecutive years of earning “effective” ratings on evaluations; valid for three years and is renewable
- Master Teacher Certificate: issued to a candidate holding an experienced educator certificate with seven years of teaching experience plus evidence of quality teaching in the form of evaluations and classroom observations; valid for three years and is renewable

See, New Hampshire Code of Administrative Rules ED 504. New Hampshire’s licensure structure has limited flexibility but does allow a superintendent to apply to the Department to issue a one-year, nonrenewable permission to employ to a person without a teaching license to meet shortage needs. *Id.* at 504.04. Administrators must obtain separate licensure, which is not based on a tiered structure. See *id.* at 506.

The New Hampshire Department of Education has authority to suspend or revoke teacher licenses. The grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are detailed under New Hampshire Code of Admin. R. ED 511.

This licensing structure is not created in statute; rather, it is the result of broad rulemaking authority granted to the Board of Education by New Hampshire Revised Statutes § 186:11, X(a).

Ohio

The Ohio State Board of Education issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Resident Educator License: issued to a candidate with a bachelor’s degree and who has completed teacher preparation; valid for four years and may be extended to complete four-year teacher residency program,

which requires mentoring, professional development, and performance-based assessments

- Professional Educator License: issued to a candidate who has successfully completed the teacher residency program; valid for five years and is renewable
- Senior Professional Educator License: issued to a candidate who holds a master's degree and has achieved the "accomplished" or "distinguished" level of performance while holding a professional educator license; valid for five years and is renewable
- Lead Professional Educator License: issued to a candidate meeting the same requirements for a senior professional educator license but with the additional requirement of national board certification; valid for five years and is renewable

See, Ohio Revised Code § 3319.22; Ohio Administrative Code 3301-24-04 and 3301-24-18. Ohio offers some flexibility with a one-year out-of-state educator license, a provisional license for a STEM teacher without a license, and one-year supplemental licenses for teachers to teach outside their licensure area. See Ohio Admin. Code 3301-24-05; and 3301-24-14 to -15. Administrators are licensed based on work experience and do not follow a tiered structure. See, Ohio Administrative Code 3301-24-05(D); 3301-24-09 to -12.

The State Board of Education has the authority to suspend or revoke licenses. The grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are detailed in Ohio Revised Code §§ 3319.31–.317.

Oregon

The Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission issues the following teacher licenses following a tiered structure:

- Restricted Teaching License: issued, for the benefit of school districts in meeting shortage problems, to a candidate who has a bachelor's degree but has not completed teacher preparation; valid for one year and is renewable two times
- Preliminary Teaching License: issued to a candidate who has completed teacher preparation but lacks advanced competencies and experience; valid for three years and renewable until the teacher meets qualifications for a professional teaching license

- Professional Teaching License: issued to a candidate who has at least four years of teaching experience and has completed advanced professional development, either by completing a dedicated development program in the state, obtaining a master's or doctorate degree, or achieving national board certification; valid for five years and is renewable
- Teacher Leader License (Pilot): issued to a candidate with five years of teaching experience with a professional teaching license, including two consecutive years of "effective" to "highly effective" evaluations, and who demonstrates professional leadership practices; valid for five years and is renewable; the rules for this license sunset on July 1, 2017 when, it is expected, the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission will adopt a revised, permanent rule
- Legacy Teaching License: issued to a candidate holding a license issued before January 1, 1999 to recognize long-term employment and experience without requiring advanced competency requirements of the newer professional teaching license; valid for three years and is renewable

See, Oregon Administrative Rules 584-210-0030 to -0070. Oregon offers a number of additional licenses to offer more flexibility in licensing teachers in the state, including reciprocal, international visiting, limited, alternative route, and emergency teaching licenses. See *id.* at 584-210-0080 to -0160. Each license in the tiered structure applies to grades prekindergarten through grade 12, but all licenses must have additional endorsements indicating subject areas the educator is authorized to teach. See *id.* at 584-220-0010, et. seq.

Administrators must obtain licensure under a separate tiered structure, including basic administrative licenses and standard administrative licenses. See *id.* at 584-046-0003 to -0055.

For statutory treatment of this licensing structure, see Oregon Revised Statutes §§ 342.121 to .138.

The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission has authority to suspend or revoke a teacher license. The grounds and procedures for disciplinary actions are detailed in Oregon Revised Statutes §§ 342.175 to .183.