

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2023

SESSION LAW 2023-125  
HOUSE BILL 432

AN ACT TO UPDATE PRINCIPAL LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS AND TO DEVELOP A PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**PART I. PRINCIPAL LICENSURE UPDATES**

**SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 115C-270.1 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(1a) Approved administrator preparation program or approved APP. – An administrator preparation program, as defined in G.S. 115C-284.1, that has been approved by the State Board as meeting the requirements established by rule."

**SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 115C-270.20 reads as rewritten:

"§ 115C-270.20. **Licensure requirements.**

...  
(b) ~~Administrator and Student Services Personnel. Administrator Licenses.~~ – The State Board shall establish ~~classification and levels of preparation necessary for issuance of licenses for administrators and student services personnel rules for the issuance of the following classes of administrator licenses, including required levels of preparation for each classification:~~

(1) Administrator license. – A five-year renewable license issued to an individual who meets all of the following requirements:

- a. Holds a bachelor's degree.
- b. Has successfully completed an approved administrator preparation program.
- c. Has at least four years of experience as a licensed professional educator.
- d. Has submitted a portfolio to the State Board for approval that meets criteria adopted by the State Board.

(2) Provisional assistant principal license. – A one-year license to be employed as an assistant principal, renewable twice, issued to an employee of a local board of education if one of the following requirements is met:

- a. The local board of education determines there is a demonstrated need for administrators and the employee enrolls in an approved administrator preparation program by the end of the first year of provisional licensure.
- b. The employee is participating in an internship required for completion of an approved administrator preparation program.

(b1) Student Services Personnel Licenses. – The State Board shall establish rules for the classification and levels of preparation necessary for issuance of licenses for student services personnel.

(c) Notwithstanding the requirement in subsection (a) of this section that an individual must hold a bachelor's degree with coursework relevant to the requested licensure area for



individuals seeking licensure in a career or technical education area, the State Board may establish alternate criteria related to that area to establish competency in lieu of a bachelor's degree.

(d) Lifetime License for Professional Educators. – The State Board of Education shall issue a lifetime license, which shall require no renewal, to an individual currently licensed as a professional educator who has met at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) Completed 30 or more years of creditable service with the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System.
- (2) Completed a combined total of 30 or more years of employment as a licensed teacher, administrator, or student services personnel in one or more public school units in North Carolina."

**SECTION 1.(c)** G.S. 115C-270.30 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(b1) Administrator Licensure Renewal. – Rules for continuing licensure for administrators shall include continuing education in high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning."

**SECTION 1.(d)** G.S. 115C-284 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 115C-284. Method of selection and requirements.**

(a) Principals and supervisors shall be elected by the local boards of education upon the recommendation of the superintendent, in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 115C-276(j).

(b) In the city administrative units, principals shall be elected by the board of education of such administrative unit upon the recommendation of the superintendent of city schools.

~~(b1) To qualify for certification as a school administrator, an individual must meet all of the following requirements:~~

- ~~(1) Submit a complete application to the State Board.~~
- ~~(2) Pay the applicable fee.~~
- ~~(3) Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or accredited university.~~
- ~~(4) Have one of the following:
  - a. A graduate degree from a public school administration program that meets the public school administration program approval standards established by the State Board of Education.
  - b. A master's degree from an accredited college or accredited university and, by December 31, 1999, have completed a public school administration program that meets the public school administration program approval standards set by the State Board of Education.
  - e. Education and training determined by the State Board of Education as equivalent.~~
- ~~(5) Pass the exam adopted by the State Board.~~

~~(c) The State Board of Education shall have entire control of certifying all applicants for supervisory and professional positions in all public elementary and high schools of North Carolina; and it shall prescribe the rules and regulations for the renewal and extension of all certificates, and shall determine and fix the salary for each grade and type of certificate which it authorizes. The State Board of Education shall require each applicant for an initial certificate or graduate certificate to demonstrate the applicant's academic and professional preparation by achieving a prescribed minimum score at least equivalent to that required by the Board on November 30, 1972, on a standard examination appropriate and adequate for that purpose. If the Board shall specify the National Teachers Examination for this purpose, the required minimum score shall not be lower than that which the Board required on November 30, 1972. The Board shall not issue provisional certificates for principals.~~

~~The Board shall issue a one year provisional assistant principal's certificate to an employee of a local board only if: (i) the local board determines there is a shortage of persons who hold or are qualified to hold a principal's certificate and the employee enrolls in an approved program leading to a masters degree in school administration before the provisional certificate expires; or~~

~~(ii) the employee is enrolled in an approved masters in school administration program and is participating in the required internship under the masters program. The Board shall extend the provisional certificate for a total of no more than two additional years while the employee is completing the program.~~

~~(c1) It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to maintain the highest quality principal and assistant principal education programs in order to enhance the competence of professional personnel certified in North Carolina. To ensure that principal and assistant principal preparation programs are upgraded to reflect a more rigorous course of study, the State Board of Education shall submit to the General Assembly not later than March 1, 1992, a plan to promote this policy. In developing this plan, the State Board shall consider (i) requiring these programs to include additional preparation for site based decision making and for the additional autonomy being granted to local school units, (ii) enhancing program entrance requirements to include assessment of an applicant's ability to complete the program and to perform as a principal, and (iii) enhancing the overall content of the programs.~~

~~The State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination and cooperation with the University Board of Governors and such other public and private agencies as are necessary, shall refine the several certification requirements, standards for approval of institutions of principal and assistant principal education, standards for institution based innovative and experimental programs, and standards for improved efficiencies in the administration of the approved programs.~~

~~(c2) The State Board of Education shall adopt new standards by July 1, 2008, for school administrator preparation programs. The new standards shall:~~

- ~~(1) Be aligned with the revised standards for the evaluation of school executives and specifically address the use of the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey;~~
- ~~(2) Require evidence of a high level of institutional commitment, including dedicated resources, for administrator preparation program improvements and redesign;~~
- ~~(3) Require the use of cross-functional work teams to determine a common curriculum framework that (i) is designed to align with defined standards, (ii) includes rigorous core courses, and (iii) will produce administrators who meet the defined standards. The cross functional work teams shall include school based personnel, faculty from schools of education and other disciplines from institutions of higher education, and representatives of State agencies;~~
- ~~(4) Require the use of cross functional work teams to design and periodically update specific standards regarding placement, required activities, and evaluations of clinical experiences. These standards shall include appropriate training for the school leaders who agree to accept and supervise interns;~~
- ~~(5) Require written agreements between the institution of higher education and a local school administrative unit to govern their shared responsibility for (i) recruitment and preparation of school administrators, especially with regard to clinical experiences including the internship, and (ii) a new administrator's success once employed;~~
- ~~(6) Require authentic partnerships between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty to fully address the need for both practical, field-based experience and academic, theory based experience. These partnerships may require a change in the institution of higher education's definition of scholarly activity and its reward system;~~
- ~~(7) Require all candidates to complete a year long internship; and~~

- (8) ~~Require the development of portfolios for emerging leaders that provide evidence they are applying their training to actual school needs and challenges.~~

~~Institutions of higher education shall redesign their school administrator preparation programs to meet the new standards and report to the State Board of Education on the redesign by July 1, 2009.~~

~~(c3) The State Board of Education shall require that all students in school administrator preparation programs demonstrate competencies in (i) using digital and other instructional technologies and (ii) supporting teachers and other school personnel to use digital and other instructional technologies to ensure provision of high quality, integrated digital teaching and learning to all students. The State Board of Education shall include continuing education in high quality, integrated digital teaching and learning as a requirement of licensure renewal.~~

~~(d) Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 385, s. 1.~~

~~(d1) It is the policy of the State of North Carolina that, subsequent to the adoption of a system of classroom teacher differentiation and prerequisites to candidacy for principal, a classroom teacher must have attained at least the second level of differentiation, have at least four years of classroom teaching experience, and possess, at least, a Masters Degree in Education Administration. This subsection shall not apply to educational personnel certified as of July 1, 1984.~~

(e) The State Board shall not issue provisional licenses for principals. It shall be unlawful for any board of education to employ or keep in service any principal or supervisor who neither holds nor is qualified to hold a license in compliance with the provision of the law or in accordance with the regulations of the State Board of Education. However, a local board of education may select a retired principal or retired assistant principal to serve as an interim principal for the remainder of any school year, regardless of licensure status.

(f) The allotment of classified principals shall be one principal for each duly constituted school with seven or more state-allotted teachers.

(g) Local boards of education shall have authority to employ supervisors in addition to those that may be furnished by the State when, in the discretion of the board of education, the schools of the local school administrative unit can thereby be more efficiently and more economically operated and when funds for the same are provided in the current expense fund budget. The duties of such supervisors shall be assigned by the superintendent with the approval of the board of education.

(h) All principals and supervisors employed in the public schools of the State or in schools receiving public funds, shall be required either to hold or be qualified to hold a certificate license in compliance with the provision of the law or in accordance with the regulations of the State Board of Education."

**SECTION 1.(e)** G.S. 115C-284.1 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 115C-284.1. ~~School administrator~~ Administrator preparation programs.**

(a) Role of APPs. – To recommend candidates for licensure, an administrator preparation program (APP) shall be approved by the State Board. For the purposes of this section, an APP is any entity that meets all of the following:

- (1) Prepares, trains, and recommends candidates for administrator licensure.
- (2) Leads to a Master's of School Administration (MSA) or Master's of Education in Educational Leadership unless the candidate already holds a master's or doctoral degree in an education-related field.
- (3) Meets one of the following:
  - a. Is accredited by a programmatic accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of Education pursuant to federal law.
  - b. Was approved by the State Board of Education as a school administrator preparation program prior to April 1, 2023.

- (b) State Board Authority. – The State Board shall have the authority to approve an APP that meets the requirements established by rule as provided in subsection (c) of this section.
- (c) Rules for Granting State Approval. – The State Board shall adopt rules for granting approval to APPs in accordance with this section. The rules shall ensure the following:
- (1) A rigorous approval process that requires that the criteria in this section are met.
  - (2) An application process, peer review, and technical assistance provided by the State Board.
  - (3) An approval period of five years and process for renewal of approval.
- (d) Minimum Approval Standards. – At a minimum, the rules established as provided in subsection (c) of this section shall require APPs to meet the following requirements:
- (1) Require all candidates to complete an internship that is at least 500 hours in duration.
  - (2) Require the development of portfolios that meet criteria adopted by the State Board and provide evidence that candidates are applying their training to actual school needs and challenges.
  - (3) Require that all APP candidates demonstrate competencies in (i) using digital and other instructional technologies and (ii) supporting teachers and other school personnel to use digital and other instructional technologies to ensure provision of high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning to all students.
  - (4) Align with the standards for the evaluation of school executives and specifically address the use of the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey.
  - (5) Require evidence of a high level of institutional commitment, including dedicated resources, for APP improvements and redesign.
  - (6) Require the use of cross-functional work teams to determine a common curriculum framework that (i) is designed to align with defined standards, (ii) includes rigorous core courses, and (iii) will produce administrators who meet the defined standards. The cross-functional work teams shall include school-based personnel, faculty from schools of education and other disciplines from institutions of higher education, and representatives of State agencies.
  - (7) Require the use of cross-functional work teams to design and periodically update specific standards regarding placement, required activities, and evaluations of clinical experiences. These standards shall include appropriate training for the school leaders who agree to accept and supervise interns.
  - (8) Require written agreements between the institution of higher education and a public school unit to govern their shared responsibility for (i) recruitment and preparation of school administrators, especially with regard to clinical experiences, including the internship, and (ii) a new administrator's success once employed.
  - (9) Require authentic partnerships between adjunct faculty and full-time faculty to fully address the need for both practical, field-based experience and academic, theory-based experience. These partnerships may require a change in the institution of higher education's definition of scholarly activity and its reward system.
  - (10) ~~Rules for approval of school administrator preparation programs shall incorporate~~ Incorporate the criteria developed in accordance with G.S. 116-74.21 for assessing proposals under the School Administrator Training Program.

(e) The State Board of Education shall develop rules to determine whether an applicant who completed an administrator preparation program outside the State meets or exceeds the requirements to hold a North Carolina administrator license."

**SECTION 1.(f)** G.S. 115C-238.68(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) Principal. – The board of directors shall employ and contract with a principal for a term not to exceed three years. The principal shall meet the requirements for ~~certification-licensure~~ set out in ~~G.S. 115C-284, G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(1)~~, unless waived by the State Board of Education upon submission of a request by the board of directors. The principal shall be responsible for school operations and shall exercise those duties and powers delegated by the board of directors."

**SECTION 1.(g)** G.S. 115C-287.1(h) reads as rewritten:

"(h) An individual who holds a provisional assistant principal's license and who is employed as an assistant principal under ~~G.S. 115C-284(e) G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(2)~~ shall be considered a school administrator for purposes of this section. Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, a local board may enter into one-year contracts with a school administrator who holds a provisional assistant principal's license. If the school administrator held career status as a teacher in the local school administrative unit prior to being employed as an assistant principal and the State Board of Education for any reason does not extend the school administrator's provisional assistant principal's license, the school administrator shall retain career status as a teacher unless the school administrator voluntarily relinquished career status or is dismissed or demoted pursuant to G.S. 115C-325. Nothing in this subsection or ~~G.S. 115C-284(e) G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(2)~~ shall be construed to require a local board to extend or renew the contract of a school administrator who holds a provisional assistant principal's license."

**SECTION 1.(h)** G.S. 116-239.10(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) Principal. – The constituent institution shall employ and contract with a principal for a term not to exceed three years. The principal shall meet the requirements for licensure set out in ~~G.S. 115C-284, G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(1)~~, unless waived, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, by the State Board of Education upon submission of a request by the chancellor that is approved by the Subcommittee. The principal shall be responsible for school operations and shall exercise those duties and powers delegated by the chancellor."

**SECTION 1.(i)** This section shall not apply to any individual eligible for a principal license requirement waiver pursuant to Section 1 of S.L. 2021-170, as amended by Section 2.8 of S.L. 2022-71.

## **PART II. DEVELOPMENT OF PORTFOLIO-BASED ASSESSMENT**

**SECTION 2.** The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC), in consultation with the Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina Principal Fellows Commission, shall develop a portfolio-based assessment system for use in applications for administrator licensure pursuant to G.S. 115C-270.20(b)(1). PEPSC shall present recommendations to the State Board of Education for approval by June 15, 2024.

**PART III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

**SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law. Section 1 of this act applies beginning July 1, 2024.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

s/ Phil Berger  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper  
Governor

Approved 2:22 p.m. this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023