

1 State of Arkansas  
2 91st General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2017  
4

*As Engrossed: H2/10/17*  
**A Bill**

HOUSE BILL 1425

5 By: Representatives Vaught, Barker, Cavanaugh, Sturch, G. Hodges  
6

7 **For An Act To Be Entitled**

8 AN ACT TO AMEND THE ARKANSAS CODE CONCERNING THE  
9 LICENSURE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND  
10 ADMINISTRATORS AND LICENSURE EXCEPTIONS; TO AUTHORIZE  
11 A TIERED LICENSURE SYSTEM; TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
12 TO BASE TEACHER COMPENSATION ON LICENSURE LEVELS  
13 APPROVED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION; AND FOR  
14 OTHER PURPOSES.  
15

16  
17 **Subtitle**

18 CONCERNING THE LICENSURE OF TEACHERS AND  
19 ADMINISTRATORS AND LICENSURE EXCEPTIONS;  
20 TO AUTHORIZE A TIERED LICENSURE SYSTEM;  
21 AND TO ALLOW DISTRICTS TO BASE  
22 COMPENSATION ON LICENSURE LEVELS.  
23

24  
25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
26

27 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(a) and (b), concerning licensure  
28 assessments for teachers, is amended to read as follows:

29 (a)(1) Arkansas teachers will demonstrate competency in subject matter  
30 content on identified assessments appropriate to their teaching area in order  
31 to be granted ~~an initial~~ a license to teach in the state under rules  
32 promulgated by the State Board of Education.

33 (2) If there is no assessment available under subdivision (a)(1)  
34 of this section for a new licensure area for subject matter content, the  
35 Department of Education may request that the state board approve an  
36 alternative method of demonstrating subject matter content competency.



1 (b) In order to obtain a teaching license, Arkansas teachers will  
2 demonstrate the ability to increase student academic achievement by  
3 demonstrating competency on ~~identified~~ assessments of teaching methods  
4 approved by the state board that result in increased student achievement.  
5

6 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(d)-(h), concerning unlicensed  
7 teachers in a classroom for more than thirty (30) days, is amended to read as  
8 follows:

9 (d) ~~Effective at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, no~~ A  
10 teacher shall not be assigned to teach a grade level or a subject for which  
11 he or she is not fully or provisionally licensed by the state unless he or  
12 she meets one (1) of the following licensure exceptions as established by  
13 rules promulgated by the state board:

14 (1)(A) An emergency teaching permit granted to a school district  
15 for a position filled by a nonlicensed teacher who meets the Arkansas  
16 Qualified Teacher Requirements promulgated by the State Board of Education.

17 (B) An emergency teaching permit may be granted annually  
18 for not more than two (2) consecutive school years;

19 (2) An effective teacher licensure exception granted to a school  
20 district for a position to be filled by an Arkansas licensed educator to  
21 teach a content area related to the educator's current licensure content  
22 area;

23 (3) A technical permit issued in cooperation with the Department  
24 of Career Education;

25 (4) A licensure exception under:

26 (A) The District of Innovation Program, § 6-15-2801 et  
27 seq.;

28 (B) The Arkansas Quality Charter Schools Act of 2013, § 6-  
29 23-101 et seq.; or

30 (C) Section 6-15-103;

31 (5) A plan for adding an area to an existing Arkansas teaching  
32 license while teaching in the content area to be added; or

33 (6) A waiver for a long-term substitute teacher granted under  
34 subsection (e) of this section.

35 (e)(1) For purposes of this section, "long-term substitute" means an  
36 individual who:

1                    (A) Holds:

2                    (i) A bachelor's degree from an accredited college  
3 or university; or

4                    (ii) An Arkansas teaching license; and

5                    (B) Is substituting for a teacher of record for thirty-one  
6 (31) or more consecutive school days in the same class during a school year.

7                    (2) No class of students shall be under the instruction of a one  
8 (1) or more substitute ~~teacher or~~ teachers for more than thirty (30)  
9 consecutive school days in the same class during a school year unless the  
10 ~~substitute teacher or teachers instructing the class have a bachelor's degree~~  
11 ~~awarded by an accredited college or university or have been licensed to teach~~  
12 ~~by the State of Arkansas~~ school district has obtained a long-term substitute  
13 waiver.

14                    ~~(2)(3)~~ A long-term substitute teacher or teachers ~~possessing a~~  
15 ~~bachelor's degree~~ shall continue to teach the class from at least the thirty-  
16 first consecutive day after the regular teacher is absent from the class  
17 until the return of the regular teacher to that class.

18                    ~~(f)(4)~~ A person serving as a substitute teacher for thirty (30) days  
19 or fewer shall:

20                    ~~(1)(A)~~ Be a high school graduate; or

21                    ~~(2)(B)~~ Hold a graduate equivalent degree.

22                    ~~(g) Subsections (e) and (f) of this section shall not apply to~~  
23 ~~substitutes for nondegreed vocational technical teachers.~~

24                    ~~(h)(1) If subsections (e) and (f) of this section impose an undue~~  
25 ~~hardship on a school district, the school district may apply to the State~~  
26 ~~Board of Education for a waiver.~~

27                    ~~(2)(5)~~ The state board shall develop rules and regulations for  
28 granting a long-term substitute waiver.

29                    ~~(3) Any school district granted a waiver from this requirement~~  
30 ~~shall be identified in the department's annual school district report card.~~

31

32                    SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-17-402 is amended to read as follows:

33                    6-17-402. Rules and regulations.

34                    (a) The State Board of Education shall issue the license of a  
35 classroom teacher, an administrator, a guidance counselor, or a library media  
36 specialist in the public schools of this state.

1           (b)(1) ~~The State Board of Education~~ state board shall promulgate rules  
2 ~~and regulations~~ for the ~~issuance,~~ licensure, relicensure, and continuance of  
3 licensure of public school teachers and administrators ~~in the public schools~~  
4 ~~of this state that:~~

5           (1) Require at a minimum that each in-state applicant for teacher  
6 licensure:

7                   (A) Completes an educator preparation program approved by  
8 the Department of Education, which shall include without limitation:

9                           (i) Educator preparation programs at institutions of  
10 higher education leading to a bachelor's degree or higher; and

11                           (ii) Alternative educator preparation programs under  
12 § 6-17-409; and

13                   (B) Demonstrates:

14                           (i) Licensure content area knowledge; and

15                           (ii) Knowledge of teaching methods; and

16           (2) Require at a minimum that each in-state applicant for an  
17 administrator's license demonstrates knowledge of state-adopted competencies  
18 and standards for educational leaders.

19           (c) The state board may promulgate rules for a tiered system of  
20 licensure, which may include without limitation:

21                   (1) An emergency teaching permit;

22                   (2) A technical permit;

23                   (3)(A) A provisional license.

24                   (B) The state board rules may provide that a provisional  
25 license may be issued if the applicant:

26                           (i) Meets the minimum qualifications under  
27 subdivision (b)(1)-(2) of this section as applicable to an applicant for a  
28 teaching or an administrator license; or

29                           (ii) Partially meets full licensure requirements;

30                   (4) A novice or first-time license;

31                   (5) A standard license; and

32                   (6)(A) A license with advanced requirements.

33                   (B) The state board may authorize a teacher leader  
34 advanced license or a teacher leader endorsement to a license.

35           ~~(2)(A) In addition to other requirements, any person applying~~  
36 ~~for initial licensure as a teacher or administrator in the public schools or~~

1 ~~a licensed teacher or administrator applying for a license in an additional~~  
2 ~~area shall take and complete a test recognized by the National Council for~~  
3 ~~Accreditation of Teacher Education and approved by the State Board of~~  
4 ~~Education and submit the scores to the Department of Education.~~

5 ~~(B) No applicant for initial licensure or licensure in an~~  
6 ~~additional area shall receive a license after July 1, 2007, unless the~~  
7 ~~applicant scores at or above the minimum level set by the State Board of~~  
8 ~~Education that is consistent with the recommendations of the Professional~~  
9 ~~Licensure Standards Board.~~

10 ~~(C)(d)(1) The state board shall approve the methods required for~~  
11 ~~applicants to meet the requirements of this section.~~

12 ~~(2) All colleges, and universities, and other state-approved~~  
13 ~~programs that prepare teachers and administrators for licensure in this state~~  
14 ~~shall report the results of the examinations any assessments required for~~  
15 ~~licensure to the department upon request.~~

16 ~~(e)(e) The State Board of Education state board shall not delegate to~~  
17 ~~any college or university any of the State Board of Education's state board's~~  
18 ~~powers or duties pertaining to the issuance, licensure, relicensure, and~~  
19 ~~continuance of licensure of public school teachers and administrators in~~  
20 ~~public schools in this state.~~

21 ~~(d)(f)(1) The state board shall promulgate rules for the licensure of~~  
22 ~~individuals through reciprocity of licensure with other states under § 6-17-~~  
23 ~~403.~~

24 ~~(2) The State Board of Education state board rules shall waive~~  
25 ~~the examination requirements under subsection (b) of this section for an~~  
26 ~~individual applying for a first-time Arkansas license who has a valid out-of-~~  
27 ~~state teaching license and three (3) years' documented teaching experience as~~  
28 ~~required by the rules promulgated by the State Board of Education.~~

29 ~~(g) The state board may establish by rule minimum qualified teacher~~  
30 ~~requirements for teachers employed where licensure has been waived pursuant~~  
31 ~~to law.~~

32 ~~(h) Rules of the state board shall identify the following as core~~  
33 ~~licensure content areas:~~

34 ~~(1) Early Childhood (K-6);~~

35 ~~(2) English language arts;~~

36 ~~(3) Mathematics;~~

- 1           (4) Science;  
 2           (5) Social studies;  
 3           (6) Art;  
 4           (7) Music; and  
 5           (8) Foreign language.

6  
 7           SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-409 is amended to read as follows:

8           6-17-409. ~~Nontraditional licensure~~ Alternative educator preparation  
 9 programs.

10          (a) As used in this section, "alternative educator preparation  
 11 program" means a program of study approved by the Department of Education for  
 12 candidates holding a bachelor's degree who are preparing for licensure as  
 13 teachers and leaders in public schools in this state.

14          ~~(b)(1)~~ The State Board of Education may offer and operate a  
 15 ~~nontraditional licensure~~ an alternative educator preparation program.

16          ~~(b)(1)(2)(A)~~ The ~~Department of Education~~ department may provide  
 17 grants of financial assistance to entities that train individuals seeking to  
 18 obtain ~~nontraditional licensure~~ through ~~the nontraditional licensure process~~  
 19 an alternative educator preparation program administered by the department.

20          ~~(2)(B)~~ The department shall pay the grants from funds  
 21 appropriated by the General Assembly to the department for such purpose.

22          ~~(e)(1)(C)~~ The state board shall promulgate rules ~~and~~  
 23 ~~regulations~~ to determine eligibility for and amount of awards of the grants  
 24 concerning the operation of the ~~nontraditional licensure~~ alternative educator  
 25 preparation program authorized by this section and for such other purposes as  
 26 may be necessary in carrying out the intent of this section.

27          ~~(2)(3)~~ The department may refuse to admit for enrollment in the  
 28 ~~nontraditional licensure~~ alternative educator preparation program  
 29 administered by the department a person who has been dismissed from a teacher  
 30 education program at an institution of higher education.

31          ~~(d)(4)~~ If the state board requires an applicant for  
 32 ~~nontraditional licensure~~ through an alternative educator preparation program  
 33 to complete one (1) or more additional college-level courses and the  
 34 applicant has obtained a bachelor's degree, the required course or courses  
 35 shall ~~meet one (1) or more of the following conditions:~~

36          ~~(1)(A) Each course shall be offered at every state supported,~~

1 ~~two-year institution of higher education.~~

2 ~~(B) If more than one (1) course is required, all courses~~  
 3 ~~shall be offered in a one-semester block; or~~

4 ~~(2) Each course shall~~ be available as an online course, a  
 5 traditional face-to-face course, or a hybrid course that is part online  
 6 instruction and part face-to-face instruction, as approved by the department.

7 ~~(e)(1) As used in this subsection, "accelerated teaching program"~~  
 8 ~~means a program intended for college graduates that provides intensive~~  
 9 ~~training and support for a period of two (2) or more years for teaching and~~  
 10 ~~leading in schools.~~

11 ~~(2) The state board shall issue a standard five-year teaching~~  
 12 ~~license to an applicant if the applicant has:~~

13 ~~(A) Either:~~

14 ~~(i) Successfully completed an accelerated teaching~~  
 15 ~~program, including:~~

16 (c) The state board may promulgate rules for the requirements for  
 17 educator licensure through other alternative educator preparation programs,  
 18 including without limitation:

19 (1) A teacher or leader academy;

20 (2) A residency program at a public school, which may be in  
 21 partnership with an educator preparation program at an institution of higher  
 22 education;

23 ~~(a)(3) The Teach For America, Inc., program;~~

24 ~~(b)(4) The Arkansas Teacher Corps program offered by of the~~  
 25 University of Arkansas at Fayetteville;

26 ~~(e)(5) The American Board for the Certification of Teacher~~  
 27 ~~Excellence program; or~~

28 ~~(d)(6) Another accelerated teaching alternative educator~~  
 29 preparation program approved by the department; or

30 ~~(ii)(7) Been awarded A program conferring~~ a master's degree in  
 31 teaching from an accredited program at an institution of higher education;  
 32 ~~and or~~

33 (8) An alternative educator preparation program or pathway for  
 34 an applicant who has professional work experience in the content area in  
 35 which the applicant desires to obtain a license.

36 ~~(B) Successfully completed the criminal records checks and~~

1 ~~Child Maltreatment Central Registry check under § 6-17-410.~~

2 ~~(3)(A)(d)(1)~~ The state board shall issue to an applicant who is in an  
3 ~~accelerated teaching~~ alternative educator preparation program a provisional  
4 teaching license that is issued under the state board's rules governing  
5 provisional licensure ~~for nontraditional licensure applicants.~~

6 ~~(B)(2)~~ The provisional license is valid for the entire period  
7 that the applicant ~~is~~:

8 ~~(i)(A)~~ Participating ~~Is participating~~ in the ~~accelerated~~  
9 ~~teaching~~ alternative educator preparation program;

10 (B) Has not been determined to have an ethics violation  
11 under § 6-17-428; and

12 ~~(ii)(C)~~ Teaching ~~Is teaching~~ in an Arkansas public school.

13 ~~(4)(e)~~ The state board may require an applicant ~~who meets the criteria~~  
14 ~~of subdivision (e)(2) of~~ for licensure under this section to submit proof of  
15 the following academic eligibility:

16 ~~(A)(i)(1)(A)~~ Passing scores, as set by the state board, on  
17 state-required ~~basic skills,~~ pedagogical, and content-area assessments, or  
18 their substantial equivalents.

19 ~~(ii)(B)~~ As used in this subdivision (e)(1), "substantial  
20 equivalents" includes without limitation the assessments required by the  
21 American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence program and an  
22 alternative method of demonstrating subject matter content competency  
23 identified by the state board under § 6-15-1004;

24 (2) Successful completion of professional educator ethics  
25 training identified by rules of the state board; and

26 ~~(B)(i)(3)~~ If As required by state board rules for the grade  
27 level and content area for which the applicant seeks licensure, successful  
28 completion of courses in Arkansas history or reading and writing in content  
29 areas, or both.

30 ~~(ii)~~ ~~An applicant who has successfully completed an~~  
31 ~~accelerated teaching program is exempt from the requirement of courses in~~  
32 ~~reading and writing in content areas.~~

33 ~~(5)(f)~~ No academic or experience requirements for obtaining an  
34 Arkansas teaching license in addition to those identified in ~~this subsection~~  
35 ~~(e)~~ subsections (c)-(e) of this section shall be imposed on an applicant who  
36 has completed one of the programs under subdivision (c)(3)-(5) and who



1 otherwise meets the requirements of this ~~subsection (e)~~ section by:

2 (A) The state board;

3 (B) The department; or

4 (C) An Arkansas state-funded college or university.

5 ~~(f)(1) The state board shall issue a nonrenewable three year~~  
6 ~~provisional professional teaching license to an applicant who submits to the~~  
7 ~~department the following:~~

8 ~~(A) Higher education transcripts evidencing the award of~~  
9 ~~at least a baccalaureate degree;~~

10 ~~(B) Evidence of a minimum of three (3) years of employment~~  
11 ~~experience in the content area that the applicant seeks to teach;~~

12 ~~(C) Evidence of an offer of employment to teach classes~~  
13 ~~for credit in an Arkansas public school;~~

14 ~~(D) A statement of justification from the applicant~~  
15 ~~relating the applicant's experience to teaching in the content area in which~~  
16 ~~the applicant seeks to teach;~~

17 ~~(E) Two (2) professional letters of recommendation~~  
18 ~~submitted by the applicant's references;~~

19 ~~(F) Passing scores on the state-required basic skills and~~  
20 ~~content knowledge tests for the content area in which the applicant seeks to~~  
21 ~~teach; and~~

22 ~~(G) Successful completion of the criminal background~~  
23 ~~checks and Child Maltreatment Central Registry check under § 6-17-410.~~

24 ~~(2)(A) An individual who receives a three year provisional~~  
25 ~~teaching license under this subsection shall have in the first year of~~  
26 ~~provisional licensure twenty four (24) hours of training in pedagogy as~~  
27 ~~determined by the Department of Education.~~

28 ~~(B) The twenty four (24) hours of training in pedagogy are~~  
29 ~~in addition to and not considered a part of the professional development~~  
30 ~~required for teachers by their employing school district or public school.~~

31 ~~(3) At the end of each year of provisional licensure, the~~  
32 ~~licensee shall undergo a summative evaluation as required by Arkansas law.~~

33 ~~(4) At the end of three (3) years of provisional licensure, the~~  
34 ~~state board shall issue a standard five year teaching license to the licensee~~  
35 ~~if the licensee:~~

36 ~~(A) Submits passing scores on the state-required~~

1 ~~pedagogical assessment or its substantial equivalent for the content area in~~  
2 ~~which the applicant seeks to teach;~~

3 ~~(B) Is identified by the employing school district as~~  
4 ~~proficient or above on a summative evaluation under § 6-17-2805 for the third~~  
5 ~~year of provisional licensure; and~~

6 ~~(C) Is recommended for full licensure by the~~  
7 ~~superintendent of the employing school district.~~

8 (g) Each applicant for a provisional license under this section shall  
9 successfully complete the criminal records checks and Child Maltreatment  
10 Central Registry check under § 6-17-410 before the department may issue the  
11 license.

12  
13 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-17-2403(a), concerning the minimum salary  
14 schedule required of school districts, is amended to read as follows:

15 (a)(1) The board of directors in each school district in the state  
16 shall pay classroom teachers upon a minimum salary schedule that provides:

17 ~~(1)(A)~~ Annual increments for education and experience;

18 ~~(2)(B)~~ A base salary; and

19 ~~(3)(C)~~ A minimum salary for a teacher with a master's  
20 degree and at least fifteen (15) years' experience.

21 (2)(A) A school district may differentiate in the salary levels  
22 of the minimum teacher compensation schedule to provide increased salaries  
23 based on a tiered licensure system established by the State Board of  
24 Education under § 6-17-402.

25 (B) The differentiated salary schedule shall not provide  
26 for a salary that is below the minimum set out in this section.

27  
28 /s/Vaught

29  
30  
31 **APPROVED: 02/28/2017**