

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2005 SESSION

CHAPTER 903

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 22.1-298 and 23-9.2:3.4 of the Code of Virginia, relating to teacher licensure qualifications.

[H 2790]

Approved March 29, 2005

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 22.1-298 and 23-9.2:3.4 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-298. Regulations governing licensure.

A. The Board of Education shall, by regulation, prescribe the requirements for licensure of teachers. Regardless of the authority of any other agency of the Commonwealth to approve educational programs, only the Board of Education shall have the authority to license teachers to be regularly employed by school boards, including those teachers employed to provide nursing education.

B. Such regulations shall include requirements that:

1. Every teacher seeking initial licensure take a professional teacher's examination prescribed by the Board;

2. Persons seeking licensure on and after July 1, 2000, complete study in attention deficit disorder and gifted education, including the use of multiple criteria to identify gifted students;

3. Persons seeking initial licensure on and after July 1, 2002, complete study in, among other things, (i) methods of improving communication between schools and families; (ii) ways of increasing family involvement in student learning at home and in school; and (iii) the Standards of Learning;

4. Persons seeking licensure with endorsements as teachers of the blind and visually impaired on and after July 1, 2000, demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing Braille;

5. Persons seeking initial licensure on and after July 1, 2003, complete study in instructional methods tailored to promote student academic progress and effective preparation for the Standards of Learning end-of-course and end-of-grade assessments;

6. Persons seeking licensure renewal on and after July 1, 2004, receive training in instructional methods tailored to promote student academic progress and effective preparation for the Standards of Learning end-of-course and end-of-grade assessments;

7. On and after July 1, 2003, persons seeking initial licensure or license renewal as teachers demonstrate proficiency in the use of educational technology for instruction; and

8. On and after July 1, 2004, persons seeking initial licensure as teachers and persons seeking licensure renewal as teachers for the first time after such date complete study in child abuse recognition and intervention in accordance with curriculum guidelines developed by the Board of Education in consultation with the Department of Social Services that are relevant to the specific teacher licensure routes.

C. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board may provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any person who does not meet the requirements of this section or any other requirement for licensure imposed by law.

D. The Board's licensure regulations shall also establish criteria and a procedure to allow persons seeking initial licensure as teachers through an alternative route as defined in Board regulations to substitute experiential learning in lieu of coursework.

Ð E. The Board's licensure regulations shall also require that licensure for superintendents and principals, on and after July 1, 2000, be contingent upon acquiring the skills established in the Board's leadership standards.

In addition, the Board's licensure regulations shall also require that, on and after July 1, 2005, initial licensure for principals and other school leaders, as may be determined by the Board, be contingent upon passage of the School Leader's Licensure Assessment.

£ F. Persons seeking initial licensure who graduate from Virginia institutions of higher education shall, on and after July 1, 2002, only be licensed as instructional personnel by the Board of Education if the endorsement areas offered at such institutions have been assessed by a national accrediting agency or by a state approval process, with final accreditation by the Board of Education.

£ G. The Board shall prescribe a professional teacher's examination for administration by Virginia's public institutions of higher education as provided in § 23-9.2:3.4 to persons seeking entry into teacher education programs in such public institutions and shall establish a minimum passing score for such examination. The examination shall be sufficiently rigorous and the minimum score set as necessary to ensure that candidates have adequate academic and professional preparation to teach.

Candidates who fail to achieve the minimum score established by the Board shall not be denied entrance into the relevant teacher education programs solely on the basis of such failure and shall have

the opportunity to address any deficiencies if enrolled in such program. Before completing any approved teacher education program, candidates must achieve the minimum score on the test prescribed by the Board.

The Board of Education, in consultation with the State Council of Higher Education, shall develop guidelines for performance reports to be submitted by the public institutions of higher education pursuant to § 23-9.2:3.4. Such reports shall include annual data on the pass rates, by institution, of graduates of Virginia's institutions of higher education taking the state licensure examination and shall not include any information identifying individual graduates.

¶ H. The Board's licensure regulations shall also provide for licensure by reciprocity with comparable endorsement areas for those individuals holding a valid out-of-state teaching license and national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a nationally recognized certification program approved by the Board of Education. The application for such individuals shall require evidence of such valid licensure and national certification and shall not require official student transcripts.

¶ I. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section and the Board's authority to license teachers, local school boards shall be authorized to issue valid three-year local eligibility licenses pursuant to § 22.1-299.3.

¶ J. Upon the expiration of a three-year local eligibility license, the holder of such license shall be eligible, as appropriate for the degree issued to such person, for a collegiate professional license or a postgraduate professional license to be issued by the Department of Education upon satisfaction of the following conditions: (i) recommendation by the division superintendent and the school board for such licensure; (ii) the completion of three successful years of teaching experience while holding a valid three-year local eligibility license as certified by the division superintendent and school board; (iii) achieving a satisfactory score on the professional teacher's examinations required by the Board; and (iv) such standards as may be prescribed by the Board of Education.

¶ K. As used in this section and the Board of Education's regulations for the licensure of school personnel:

"Accredited institution" means an institution of higher education accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education, or by a state approval process.

§ 23-9.2:3.4. Teacher education programs; reporting requirements.

A. The boards of visitors of those public institutions of higher education providing teacher education programs shall administer the entrance examination prescribed by the Board of Education pursuant to § 22.1-298 to all persons seeking entry into such teacher education programs.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this title to the contrary, such boards of visitors shall not deny candidates who fail to achieve the minimum score established by the Board entrance into the relevant teacher education programs solely on the basis of such failure, and shall require achievement of such minimum passing score as a condition of completing any approved teacher education program. Students failing to achieve the minimum passing score shall have the opportunity to address any deficiencies while enrolled in such teacher education program.

B. All Virginia public institutions of higher education that offer teacher education programs, master's degree programs in education or master's degree programs in administration shall submit annual performance reports as set forth in Board of Education guidelines and as required by subsection ¶ G of § 22.1-298. Such reports shall include annual data on the pass rates of graduates of such Virginia institutions of higher education taking the state licensure examination and shall not include any information identifying individual graduates.