

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2017 SESSION

CHAPTER 240

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 22.1-298.1 and 22.1-307 of the Code of Virginia, relating to licensure of school personnel; investigation of certain complaints; license revocation.

[H 2432]

Approved February 23, 2017

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 22.1-298.1 and 22.1-307 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-298.1. Regulations governing licensure.

A. As used in this section:

"Alternate route to licensure" means a nontraditional route to teacher licensure available to individuals who meet the criteria specified in the regulations issued by the Board of Education.

"Industry certification credential" means an active career and technical education credential that is earned by successfully completing a Board of Education-approved industry certification examination, being issued a professional license in the Commonwealth, or successfully completing an occupational competency examination.

"Licensure by reciprocity" means a process used to issue a license to an individual coming into the Commonwealth from another state when that individual meets certain conditions specified in the Board of Education's regulations.

"Professional teacher's assessment" means those tests mandated for licensure as prescribed by the Board of Education.

"Provisional license" means a nonrenewable license issued by the Board of Education for a specified period of time, not to exceed three years, to an individual who may be employed by a school division in the Commonwealth and who generally meets the requirements specified in the Board of Education's regulations for licensure, but who may need to take additional coursework or pass additional assessments to be fully licensed with a renewable license.

"Renewable license" means a license issued by the Board of Education for five years to an individual who meets the requirements specified in the Board of Education's regulations.

B. The Board of Education shall prescribe, by regulation, the requirements for the licensure of teachers and other school personnel required to hold a license. Such regulations shall include requirements for the denial, suspension, cancellation, revocation, and reinstatement of licensure *and procedures for the immediate and thorough investigation by the division superintendent or his designee of any complaint alleging that a license holder has engaged in conduct that may form the basis for the revocation of his license. At a minimum, such procedures for investigations contained in such regulations shall require (i) the division superintendent to petition for the revocation of the license upon completing such investigation and finding that there is reasonable cause to believe that the license holder has engaged in conduct that forms the basis for revocation of a license; (ii) the school board to proceed to a hearing on such petition for revocation within 90 days of the mailing of a copy of the petition to the license holder, unless the license holder requests the cancellation of his license in accordance with Board regulations; and (iii) the school board to provide a copy of the investigative file and such petition for revocation to the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time that the hearing is scheduled.* The Board of Education shall revoke the license of any person for whom it has received a notice of dismissal or resignation pursuant to subsection F of § 22.1-313 and, in the case of a person who is the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect, after all rights to any *administrative* appeal provided by § 63.2-1526 have been exhausted. 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.

The Board of Education shall prescribe by regulation the licensure requirements for teachers who teach only online courses, as defined in § 22.1-212.23. Such license shall be valid only for teaching online courses. Teachers who hold a five-year renewable license issued by the Board of Education may teach online courses for which they are properly endorsed.

C. The Board of Education's regulations shall include requirements that a person seeking initial licensure:

1. Complete professional assessments as prescribed by the Board of Education;
2. Complete study in attention deficit disorder;
3. Complete study in gifted education, including the use of multiple criteria to identify gifted students; and
4. Complete study in methods of improving communication between schools and families and ways

of increasing family involvement in student learning at home and at school.

D. In addition, such regulations shall include requirements that:

1. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license demonstrate proficiency in the use of educational technology for instruction;

2. Every person seeking initial licensure and persons seeking licensure renewal as teachers who have not completed such study shall 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;

3. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall receive professional development 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;

4. Every person seeking renewal of a license shall complete all renewal requirements, including professional development in a manner prescribed by the Board, except that no person seeking renewal of a license shall be required to satisfy any such requirement by completing coursework and earning credit at an institution of higher education;

5. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall provide evidence of completion of certification or training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators. The certification or training program shall be based on the current national evidence-based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator, such as a program developed by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. The Board shall provide a waiver for this requirement for any person with a disability whose disability prohibits such person from completing the certification or training;

6. Every person seeking licensure with an endorsement as a teacher of the blind and visually impaired shall demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing Braille;

7. Every teacher seeking an initial license in the Commonwealth with an endorsement in the area of career and technical education shall have an industry certification credential in the area in which the teacher seeks endorsement. If a teacher seeking an initial license in the Commonwealth has not attained an industry certification credential in the area in which the teacher seeks endorsement, the Board may, upon request of the employing school division or educational agency, issue the teacher a provisional license to allow time for the teacher to attain such credential; and

8. (Effective July 1, 2017) Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall complete awareness training, provided by the Department of Education, on the indicators of dyslexia, as that term is defined by the Board pursuant to regulations, and the evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia.

E. The Board's regulations shall require that initial licensure for principals and assistant principals be contingent upon passage of an assessment as prescribed by the Board.

F. The Board shall establish criteria in its regulations to effectuate the substitution of experiential learning for coursework for those persons seeking initial licensure through an alternate route as defined in Board regulations.

G. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Board (i) may provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, pursuant to subdivision D 7 or to any person who does not meet the requirements of this section or any other requirement for licensure imposed by law and (ii) shall provide for the issuance of a provisional license, valid for a period not to exceed three years, to any former member of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Virginia National Guard who has received an honorable discharge and has the appropriate level of experience or training but does not meet the requirements for a renewable license.

H. The Board's licensure regulations shall also provide for licensure by reciprocity:

1. 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;

2. For individuals who have obtained a valid out-of-state license, with full credentials and without deficiencies, that is in force at the time the application for a Virginia license is received by the Department of Education. The individual must establish a file in the Department of Education by submitting a complete application packet, which shall include official student transcripts. An assessment of basic skills as provided in § 22.1-298.2 and service requirements shall not be imposed for these licensed individuals; however, other licensing assessments, as prescribed by the Board of Education, shall be required; and

3. The Board may include other provisions for reciprocity in its regulations.

§ 22.1-307. Dismissal of teacher; grounds.

A. Teachers may be dismissed for incompetency, immorality, noncompliance with school laws and regulations, disability as shown by competent medical evidence when in compliance with federal law,

conviction of a felony or a crime of moral turpitude, or other good and just cause. A teacher shall be dismissed if such teacher is or becomes the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse and neglect, pursuant to § 63.2-1505, and after all rights to ~~an~~ *any administrative* appeal provided by § 63.2-1526 have been exhausted. The fact of such finding, after all rights to ~~an~~ *any administrative* appeal provided by § 63.2-1526 have been exhausted, shall be grounds for the local school division to recommend that the Board of Education revoke such person's license to teach. No teacher shall be dismissed or placed on probation solely on the basis of the teacher's refusal to submit to a polygraph examination requested by the school board.

B. For the purposes of this article, "incompetency" may be construed to include, but shall not be limited to, consistent failure to meet the endorsement requirements for the position or one or more unsatisfactory performance evaluations.