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SENATE BILL NO. 619

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to teacher licensure; mental health first aid.

Patron—Deeds

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia is 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 guidelines developed pursuant to subsection N or 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, pass additional assessments, or meet alternative evaluation standards to be fully licensed with a renewable license.

"Renewable license" means a license issued by the Board of Education for 10 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 procedures for (i) the denial, suspension, cancellation, revocation, and reinstatement of licensure; (ii) written reprimand of license holders, notice of which shall be made by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to division superintendents or their designated representatives; and (iii) 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 (a) 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; (b) 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 (c) 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 10-year renewable license issued by the Board of Education may teach online courses for which they are properly endorsed.

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

61 1. Demonstrate proficiency in the relevant content area, communication, literacy, and other core skills
62 for educators by achieving a qualifying score on professional assessments or meeting alternative
63 evaluation standards as prescribed by the Board;

64 2. Complete study in attention deficit disorder;

65 3. Complete study in gifted education, including the use of multiple criteria to identify gifted
66 students; and

67 4. Complete study in methods of improving communication between schools and families and ways
68 of increasing family involvement in student learning at home and at school.

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

70 1. Every person seeking initial licensure and persons seeking licensure renewal as teachers who have
71 not completed such study shall complete study in child abuse recognition and intervention in accordance
72 with curriculum guidelines developed by the Board of Education in consultation with the Department of
73 Social Services that are relevant to the specific teacher licensure routes;

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

78 3. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall provide evidence of completion
79 of certification or training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of
80 automated external defibrillators. The certification or training program shall (i) be based on the current
81 national evidence-based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and
82 the use of an automated external defibrillator, such as a program developed by the American Heart
83 Association or the American Red Cross, and (ii) include hands-on practice of the skills necessary to
84 perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The Board shall provide a waiver for this requirement for any
85 person with a disability whose disability prohibits such person from completing the certification or
86 training;

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

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

95 6. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall complete awareness training,
96 provided by the Department of Education, on the indicators of dyslexia, as that term is defined by the
97 Board pursuant to regulations, and the evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia;
98 and

99 7. Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license with an endorsement as a school
100 counselor shall complete training in the recognition of mental health disorder and behavioral distress,
101 including depression, trauma, violence, youth suicide, and substance abuse; and

102 8. *Every person seeking initial licensure shall complete a Mental Health First Aid training or similar*
103 *program and every person seeking renewal of a license shall complete an online module on mental*
104 *health developed or approved by the Department of Education.*

105 E. No teacher who seeks a provisional license shall be required to meet any requirement set forth in
106 subdivision D 1, 3, or 6 as a condition of such licensure, but each such teacher shall complete each such
107 requirement during the first year of provisional licensure.

108 F. The Board shall issue a license to an individual seeking initial licensure who has not completed
109 professional assessments as prescribed by the Board, if such individual (i) holds a provisional license
110 that will expire within three months; (ii) is employed by a school board; (iii) is recommended for
111 licensure by the division superintendent; (iv) has attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain a qualifying score
112 on the professional assessments as prescribed by the Board; (v) has received an evaluation rating of
113 proficient or above on the performance standards for each year of the provisional license, and such
114 evaluation was conducted in a manner consistent with the Guidelines for Uniform Performance
115 Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents; and (vi) meets all other
116 requirements for initial licensure.

117 G. Each local school board or division superintendent may waive for any individual whom it seeks to
118 employ as a career and technical education teacher and who is also seeking initial licensure or renewal
119 of a license with an endorsement in the area of career and technical education any applicable
120 requirement set forth in subsection C or subdivision D 2, 4, or 6.

H. 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.

I. 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. Such alternate routes shall include eligibility for any individual to receive, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a renewable one-year license to teach in public high schools in the Commonwealth if he has:

1. Received a graduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education;
2. Completed at least 30 credit hours of teaching experience as an instructor at a regionally accredited institution of higher education;

3. Received qualifying scores on the professional teacher's assessments prescribed by the Board, including the communication and literacy assessment and the content-area assessment for the endorsement sought; and

4. Met the requirements set forth in subdivisions D 1 and 3.

J. 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 5 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.

K. 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 any spouse of an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Commonwealth who has 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. Each such individual shall establish a file in the Department of Education by submitting a complete application packet, which shall include official student transcripts. No service requirements or licensing assessments shall be required for any such individual; and

3. 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. Each such individual shall establish a file in the Department of Education by submitting a complete application packet, which shall include official student transcripts. No service requirements or licensing assessments shall be required for any such individual.

L. The Board shall include in its regulations an alternate route to licensure for elementary education preK-6 and an alternate route to licensure for special education general curriculum K-12. Each such alternate route to licensure shall require individuals to (i) meet the qualifying scores on the content area assessment prescribed by the Board for the endorsements sought and (ii) complete an alternative certification program that provides training in the pedagogy and methodology of the respective content or special education areas prescribed by the Board. The curriculum of any such alternative certification program shall be approved by the Board. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude the Board from establishing other alternate routes to licensure.

M. The Board, in its regulations providing for licensure by reciprocity established pursuant to subsection K, shall (i) permit applicants to submit third-party employment verification forms and (ii) grant special consideration to individuals who have successfully completed a program offered by a provider that is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

N. The Board shall develop guidelines that establish a process to permit a school board or any organization sponsored by a school board to petition the Board for approval of an alternate route to licensure that may be used to meet the requirements for a provisional or renewable license or any endorsement. Any such alternate route may include alternatives to the regulatory requirements for teacher preparation, including alternative professional assessments and coursework. The petitioner may proffer or the Board may impose conditions in conjunction with the approval of such petition.

2. That the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, shall develop or approve one or more online modules on mental health no later than November 30, 2020.