# Superintendent’s Memo #083-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 30, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Guidance on Licensure of Instructional Personnel

To ensure the safety of citizens of Virginia during the COVID-19 outbreak, Governor Northam has ordered that all K-12 schools remain closed through the end of the school year. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) continues to evaluate options to provide flexibility in meeting the requirements associated with testing and accountability, instructional days/hours, attendance, graduation, and licensing of instructional personnel. As information becomes available, it is added to the Department of Education’s [FAQ document](http://doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/covid-19-faq.shtml) that is posted on the front page of our [website](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/).

VDOE has been fielding questions and concerns related to the impact of closings on the licensing of instructional personnel and candidates completing approved educator preparation programs at Virginia colleges and universities. When possible, modifications to regulations will be made regarding the issuance of licenses and requirements for candidates completing programs at our institutions of higher education.

Below are a series of questions and answers to address inquiries and concerns received by the VDOE.

**What if individuals holding provisional licenses expiring June 30, 2020, cannot meet the requirements for a renewable license this year due to circumstances related to COVID-19?**

Section 22.1-299 of the *Code of Virginia* allows the Board to extend for at least one additional year, but for no more than two additional years, the three-year provisional license of a teacher upon receiving from the division superintendent (i) a recommendation for such extension and (ii) satisfactory performance evaluations for such teacher for each year of the original three-year provisional license. Flexibility beyond what is provided in the *Code* will require General Assembly review and action. The General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene at the end of April, at which point, VDOE will provide additional information for individuals with provisional licenses expiring on June 30, 2020.

**What if an individual with a renewable license that expires June 30, 2020, cannot complete renewal requirements due to COVID-19?**

If license holders employed by a Virginia educational agency have completed the requirements for renewal, the educational agency should submit the renewal requests as soon as practicable to avoid any administrative delays. If license holders are unable to meet renewal requirements by June 30 because of COVID-19, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will make modifications to the licensure regulations to grant a one-year extension of the license (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) to allow license holders to complete all renewal requirements. License holders employed by Virginia educational agencies should not submit renewal documents to the VDOE; they are to be sent to the employing school division or accredited nonpublic school. Please note that Virginia employing educational agencies will be provided additional instructions related to the format and timeline for submitting requests for extensions.

In the past, the Department of Education has not extended licenses for individuals who are not employed in a Virginia educational agency. However, individuals holding a renewable license that **expires June 30, 2020**, who are not employed in a Virginia educational agency and could not complete renewal requirements due to COVID-19 may also request a one-year extension of their licenses. A form to request an extension will be posted on the [Licensure Webpage](http://doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/index.shtml) with additional instructions by May 1, 2020.

**If a teacher is seeking an initial Virginia license and has not yet attained an industry certification credential, what should an employing school division or educational agency request?**

Section 22.1-298.1 of the *Code of Virginia* states, in part, the following:

*A. As used in this section:*

*…"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….*

*…5. 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…*

The Virginia employing educational agency may request the issuance of a provisional license for an individual seeking an initial license in a career and technical education area to allow the teacher time to earn an industry certification credential.

**What if individuals cannot complete the hands-on cardiopulmonary resuscitation CPR training required for an initial teaching license or license renewal?**

Training in emergency first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and the use of automated external defibrillators can be completed through online programs. However, state law also requires that CPR training include hands-on practice of the skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is unable to waive the hands-on CPR requirement because it is required by § 22.1-298.1 of the *Code of Virginia*; thiswill require General Assembly review and action. The General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene at the end of April, at which point, VDOE will provide additional information regarding the hands-on CPR training requirement.

**What is the impact of school closings on candidates completing student teaching or internships this semester in educator preparation programs at Virginia colleges and universities?**

The VDOE has communicated with deans and directors of educator preparation programs to address concerns that candidates currently enrolled in student teaching may not be able to complete the Board of Education 10-week student teaching requirement or internship requirements for programs, such as administration and supervision, due to school closings. Any modification request from deans or directors of educator preparation programs will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. A form will be provided to institutions of higher education to request a modification.

**What if the school division has not conducted performance evaluations this school year?**

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, evaluation of instructional personnel is the responsibility of the local school division. The VDOE suggests that consult school divisions consult their school board attorneys regarding this matter. Please note that performance evaluations also apply to other circumstances, such as requesting provisional license extensions and achieving continuing contract status.  Similarly, we recommend school divisions consider local policy in consultation with their school board attorney to determine continuing contract status.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Patty S. Pitts, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Licensure, at Patty.Pitts@doe.virginia.gov or (804) 371-2522.

JFL/psp