



VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM

Agenda Item: O

Date: October 20, 2022

Title: First Review of Revisions to the *Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Licensure in Response to House Bill 2486 of the 2019 Virginia General Assembly*

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Purpose of Presentation:

Other initiative or requirement. Specify below:

Guidance document changing in order to align with recent legal advice.

Executive Summary:

Chapter [409](#) of the 2019 Acts of the Assembly added subsection N to § [22.1-298.1](#) of the *Code of Virginia*, which requires the Virginia Board of Education (Board) to “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 for an alternate route to licensure that may be used to meet the requirements for a provisional or renewable license or any endorsement.”

In November 2019, the Board approved the *Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Licensure in Response to House Bill 2486 of the 2019 Virginia General Assembly* (“*Guidelines*”) in order to fulfill the requirements of § [22.1-298.1](#) N.¹

In the process of reviewing applications submitted pursuant to the *Guidelines*, members of the Board and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) staff raised questions about the process set forth in the *Guidelines*. Of specific concern was the last line of the *Guidelines*, which states that “[t]he Virginia Board of Education must approve the alternate routes to licensure program.” The statement raised concerns whether the *Guidelines* created a process whereby the approval of petitions for alternate routes to licensure had been improperly delegated to the panel convened by VDOE. Whereas § [22.1-298.1](#) N permits for a school board or organization sponsored by a

¹ As indicated in the name, this guidance document was meant to fulfill the requirements of [HB2486](#) (2019).

school board “to petition the Board for approval,” the *Guidelines* appear to require the Board to approve the results of the panel.²

After consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, VDOE staff is presenting a minor technical revision to the *Guidelines* in order to align the document with legal advice and preserve the Board’s final authority in deciding to approve alternate routes to licensure under § [22.1-298.1](#) N.

The only revisions are to Part VI regarding Program Review and Approval. Specifically, the revisions strike the problematic phrase and specify that the panel will make a recommendation regarding the proposed alternate route to the Board. The revisions also make clear that the Board will consider the recommendation at a meeting and, in accordance with the statute, may impose conditions in conjunction with its approval.

The Board has not yet approved an alternate route under § [22.1-298.1](#) N according to the *Guidelines* and it is of paramount importance that the Board preserve the authority delegated to it by the General Assembly in order to ensure that alternate routes are approved in accordance with Virginia law.

Action Requested:

Other. Specify below:

The Board is requested to waive first review and approve the technical revisions.

Superintendent’s Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education waive first review and approve this item on first and final review.

Rationale for Action:

After consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, Board action is necessary to preserve the Board’s authority over alternate routes to licensure.

Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:

The VDOE established a workgroup on August 27, 2019, to recommend *Guidelines*. Pursuant to § [22.1-305.2](#) of the *Code*, the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL)

² The difficulty centers on the phrase “the Virginia Board of Education must approve the alternate routes to licensure programs” being read as a restriction of the Board’s discretion and authority as opposed to a statement of process, i.e., that the proposal must go to the Board for approval after the review is conducted by the panel.

“shall advise the Board of Education and submit recommendations on policies applicable to the qualifications, examination, licensure, and regulation of school personnel...”

The workgroup was composed of school division human resources officials; an assistant superintendent; a teacher; university administrator; and representatives from the Virginia Education Association, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, Virginia Community College System, and the Virginia Department of Education. The workgroup was facilitated by the Assistant Superintendent of Teacher Education and Licensure.

ABTEL reviewed the recommendations of the workgroup on September 23, 2019 and requested the following edits to the guidelines to require:

- Programs to be initially reviewed by the Board of Education for a three-year period and then renewed for a seven-year period;
- Program proposals under the topic of “PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND JUSTIFICATION” to include a description of the capacity to deliver the program, including faculty/instructors’ qualifications and the background and expertise of the program provider; and
- Proposals to be reviewed by a panel convened by the VDOE and restate that the Board must approve programs.

ABTEL unanimously approved the recommendations to be submitted to the Board; and the Board subsequently approved the *Guidelines* in November 2019. Following Board approval, the Guidelines were posted in Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period before becoming effective on January 23, 2020.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

After approval by the Board, the guidance document will be posted on the Virginia Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period, in accordance with the Virginia Administrative Process Act, before becoming effective.

Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

This change will not have an impact on the fiscal or human resources of either the Department or local school divisions.

**GUIDELINES FOR ALTERNATE ROUTES TO LICENSURE IN
RESPONSE TO HOUSE BILL 2486
OF THE 2019 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Education preparation providers must be certified or approved. Career Switcher Program Providers must be certified by the Virginia Department of Education in accordance with the *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel*; alternate programs for professional studies are approved by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and school boards or an organization sponsored by a school board may petition the Board of Education for approval of an alternate route to licensure.

Individuals seeking initial licensure are subject to Board of Education regulations and statutory requirements for licensure. With the exception of the alternate provisional route for the Technical Professional License in certain specialized career and technical education endorsement areas, individuals must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university. Board of Education requirements, including applicable assessments, are required. Individuals seeking an endorsement in career and technical education are required to complete an industry credential for initial licensure.

A school board or any organization sponsored by a school board may petition the Board for approval of an alternate route. School divisions are encouraged to collaborate together on an alternate route to licensure.

A school board or an organization sponsored by a school board must submit an application for program review and approval to the Board of Education. The Department of Education will coordinate the review of the programs. Programs may be approved by the Virginia Board of Education initially for a three-year period and subsequently renewed for a seven-year period, with annual reports required as requested by the Department of Education.

The approval period for the alternate route to licensure will end if a school board discontinues the sponsorship of an approved organization. The school board must notify the Virginia Board of Education immediately in writing of a program's discontinuance, including information on the individuals who are in the process of completing the program and the plan and timeline on how the teachers will complete the alternate education preparation program.

The school board petition must include the following:

APPLICATION

Part I: APPLICATION COVER PAGE

School Board	Organization Sponsored by a School Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of School Board • Program Contact • Address • Phone Number • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of Organization • Program Contact • Address • Phone Number
School Board	Organization Sponsored by a School Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Address • Signature of School Board Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Address • Signature of School Board Chair and Organization Official

Part II: PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND JUSTIFICATION

- Describe the program, including the targeted endorsement programs. Include the delivery model and sustainability of the program, as well as resources provided to participants.
- Justify the need for the alternate route program.
- Describe the capacity to deliver the program, including faculty/instructors' qualifications and the background and expertise of the program provider.
- Provide documentation of the program's accreditation, if applicable. Programs that are accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) will be granted special consideration; however, the content area of the program must be reviewed by the Virginia Department of Education to ensure alignment with Virginia standards and competencies.
- Include the targeted audience for the program. Describe how candidates/teachers will be recruited and selected for the participating school divisions.
- Describe the program evaluation process for the program at the school division and board level. Stakeholders must be included in the program review process.

Part III: CONTENT AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

- Describe the requirements, including content and expected outcomes, of the program.
- Describe how the program is aligned and addresses Board of Education requirements, including the following:
 - Virginia Board of Education competencies outlined in the *Regulations Governing the Review and Approval of Education Programs in Virginia*.
 - Preparation of teachers to ensure students (1) attain the knowledge, skills, experiences, and attributes to be successful in college and/or the workforce and to be “life ready” (Profile of a Virginia Graduate) and (2) develop the following competencies known as the “Five C’s”:
 - Critical thinking;
 - Creative thinking;
 - Communication;
 - Collaboration; and
 - Citizenship.

Part IV: SUPERVISED FIELD/CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

Field experiences must be included in the program, and candidates must be supported. For an initial license, individuals must complete 10 weeks of supervised classroom experience in the endorsement area sought under the supervision of a teacher with demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom. [Consideration may be given to a deliberately structured supervised classroom teaching experience equivalent to 10 weeks.] One year of successful, full time teaching experience in the employing public school or a teacher residency may be accepted.

- Describe the period of the field/clinical experiences and how candidates will be supervised.
- Provide plans to assist any identified weaknesses.
- Describe the support provided to the teachers (mentors, coaches, induction programs, etc.).

Part V: ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

- Describe the program’s admission and exit criteria.
- Describe how candidates will be assessed to ensure they have mastered the content, pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively teach.
- Describe program evaluation.

- Provide indicators of teacher effectiveness, including impact of the completers on PreK12 learning.
- Include information on program completers' satisfaction of the program and relevance to teaching, as well as information on the employer's satisfaction with the program preparation.

Part VI: PROGRAM REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- Proposals will be reviewed by a panel convened by the Virginia Department of Education.
~~The Virginia Board of Education must approve the alternate routes to licensure programs.~~
The panel will make a recommendation regarding the proposal to the Board of Education.
The Board will consider the recommendation at one of its meetings and, should it approve the proposal, may impose conditions in conjunction with its approval.