# Agenda Item: C

## Date: July 27, 2023

## Title: First and Final Review of Applications from Divisions Partnering with iteach to Provide an Alternate Route to Licensure

## Presenter: Jim Chapman, Director of Board Relations

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

## Executive Summary:

On November 14, 2019, the Virginia Board of Education (Board) approved proposed *Guidelines for Alternate Routes to Licensure in Response to House Bill 2486 of the 2019 Virginia General Assembly* (*Guidelines*). [HB2486 (2019)](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?191+ful+CHAP0409) required, in part, the following:

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.

On June 15, 2023, the Board approved petitions from the following school divisions for an alternate route to licensure through a partnership with iteachUS:

Amherst County Public Schools

Arlington County Public Schools

Bedford County Public Schools

Botetourt County Public Schools

Charles City Public Schools

Chesapeake City Public Schools

Chesterfield County Public Schools

Dinwiddie County Public Schools

Essex County Public Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools

Greensville County Public Schools

Hampton City Public Schools

Henry County Public Schools

Hopewell City Public Schools

Isle of Wight County Public Schools

Mathews County Public Schools

Middlesex County Public Schools

Newport News City Public Schools

Powhatan County Public Schools

Prince George County Public Schools

Roanoke County Public Schools

Shenandoah County Public Schools

Sussex County Public Schools

Westmoreland County Public Schools

The Board approved the petitions with the following conditions:

1. That iteach maintain its accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation;
2. That the petitioning divisions comply with the provisions with the Virginia Literacy Act;
3. That the petitioning divisions, prior to the beginning of the school year, submit plans for approval by VDOE to support the alternate route with a mentorship program; and
4. That partnering divisions and iteach submit data on quality and effectiveness to the VDOE on an annual basis.

Since the approval in June, VDOE has received substantially similar petitions from the following school divisions:

Accomack County Public Schools

Amherst County Public Schools

Buckingham County Public Schools

*Campbell County Public Schools*

Danville Public Schools

Lancaster County Public Schools

Lynchburg City Schools

*Madison County Public Schools*

*Northampton County Public Schools*

Approving alternate routes to licensure aligns with Priority 2 of the Board’s *Comprehensive Plan*: advance policies that increase the number of candidates entering the teaching profession and encourage and support the recruitment, development, and retention of well-prepared and skilled teachers and school leaders.

## Action Requested:

Final review: Action is requested at this meeting.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board approve the petitions for alternate route with the following conditions:

1. That iteach maintain its accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation;
2. That the petitioning divisions comply with the provisions with the Virginia Literacy Act;
3. That the petitioning divisions, prior to the beginning of the school year, submit plans for approval by VDOE to support the alternate route with a mentorship program; and
4. That partnering divisions and iteach submit data on quality and effectiveness to the VDOE on an annual basis.

Further, the Superintendent recommends that the Board direct VDOE to approve substantially similar petitions for an alternate route to licensure with the same conditions listed above.

## Previous Review or Action:

**Date**: [June 15, 2023](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/state-board-data-funding/virginia-board-of-education/board-meetings-agendas-and-minutes/june-14-15-2023)

**Action**: [Final Review of Divisions Partnering with iteach to Provide an Alternate Route to Licensure](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/45345/638218326955870000)

## Background Information and Statutory Authority:

In addition to the completion of an approved teacher preparation program and application for a license through reciprocity, the Board of Education’s *Licensure Regulations for School Personnel* ([8VAC20-23](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title8/agency20/chapter23/)) provide for the following alternate routes to licensure:

* Career Switcher Alternate Route for Career Professionals
* Provisional License Route for Individuals Employed by a Virginia Educational Agency
* Provisional Alternate Route to a Technical Professional License (Career and Technical Education) for Individuals Employed by a Virginia Educational Agency
* Alternate Route in Special Education (Provisional License)
* Alternate Programs at Institutions of Higher Education
* Experiential Learning Alternate Route to Licensure

Through the adoption of [HB2486 (2019),](https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?191+ful+CHAP0409) the General Assembly created a new, different alternate pathway to empower school divisions to directly address teacher recruitment issues in their local community. The law requires, in part, the following:

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| § [**22.1-298.1**](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/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 theguidelines developed pursuant to subsection M or regulations issued by the Board of Education. … M. 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.   |

The *Guidelines* adopted by the Board became effective on January 23, 2020, after the 30-day public comment period. The Office of the Attorney General, in consultation with VDOE staff, recommended a minor technical revision to the *Guidelines.* The Board approved new *Guidelines*, which became effective on December 22, 2022, following a 30-day public comment period.

The purpose of this alternate route to licensure is to ensure local school divisions have an opportunity to meet their unique needs in recruiting and retaining educators for their school communities. While each division may be different, the Board of Education determines the requirements of teacher licensure so that teachers across the Commonwealth are adequately prepared to meet the needs of students in every classroom. This legislation allows for different routes to teacher preparation. In accordance with state law, school divisions are applying for approval to offer an alternate route to licensure for educator candidates to satisfy the requirements and competencies. Candidates who complete the school divisions’ Board approved alternate route under these *Guidelines* will be issued a current Virginia educator license with the same type of endorsements as other candidates who completed an approved teacher preparation program or other approved alternate route to licensure.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout the application process, VDOE staff have been in contact with the applicants regarding the application and the process.

## Implementation and Communication

VDOE staff will communicate the decision of the Board to applicants following the meeting.

If approved by the Board, VDOE staff in the Office of Licensure and School Leadership will work with each applicant-division to ensure that individuals pursuing the alternate route to licensure are assisted through the application process and that all applications received are processed in a timely manner.

## Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:

The administrative requirements for approving provisional licenses via this alternate route will be absorbed within existing resources at the Department of Education. The cost of the administration of the approved division alternate routes to licensure will be absorbed by each individual division in accordance with the respective Memorandums of Understanding iteach has with each division.