

Teacher Licensure

Empowering the Profession

North Carolina faces a teacher shortage crisis. As the number of students grows, the number of teachers dwindles. Many districts face high vacancies for high quality teachers across subject areas and grade levels, including elementary schools.

Enrollment in schools of education is on the decline, locally and nationally, promising to exacerbate the teacher shortage in the future. The General Assembly must alleviate the teacher shortage in North Carolina, at no cost to taxpayers, by:

Establishing true reciprocity with other states. True reciprocity does not currently exist in North Carolina. Lawmakers should waive the NC test for teachers who have completed teacher education programs in other states and have met that state's requirements to qualify for a teaching license.

Reinstating an emergency teacher licensure process. Classrooms across the state sit empty at the beginning of the school year due to the teacher shortage. In this emergency situation, the state should allow the hire of a teacher who holds a bachelor's degree and has skills/background in the subject area. To be rehired for the next school year, the teacher should be required to complete minimum coursework and/or in-service training.

Creating an expedited military veteran and spouse licensure system. North Carolina should continue our proud relationship with the military by helping military veterans and spouses to easily obtain a teaching license when they relocate here.

Reinstating the alternative licensure routes that expired in 2006. In light of the teacher shortage, alternative routes allowing skilled individuals to enter the classroom more quickly than through lateral entry should be developed by the state.

Honoring North Carolina education credentials without additional tests. Graduates of bachelor's degree programs from North Carolina schools of education should be granted an initial teacher license without additional testing.

Expediting licensure at regional centers. By authorizing regional licensure centers, neighboring school districts could collaborate to quickly credential their own teachers, thus easing the backlog of applications at the Department of Public Instruction and ensuring vacancies are filled with qualified educators.