

TEACHER LICENSURE AMENDMENTS

2024 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Norman K Thurston

Senate Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses changes in teacher licensure requirements.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ amends legislative findings on teacher competency;
- ▶ amends rulemaking authority for the State Board of Education;
- ▶ limits the delegation of authority regarding preparation programs;
- ▶ clarifies roles for local education agencies; and
- ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53E-6-103, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 186

53E-6-301, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

53E-6-302, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 285

53E-6-902, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2020, Chapter 408

53G-11-509, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2019, Chapter 293



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29 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

30 Section 1. Section **53E-6-103** is amended to read:

31 **53E-6-103. Legislative findings on teacher quality -- Declaration of education as a**
32 **profession.**

33 (1) (a) The Legislature acknowledges that education is perhaps the most important
34 function of state and local governments, recognizing that the future success of our state and
35 nation depend in large part upon the existence of a responsible and educated citizenry.

36 (b) The Legislature further acknowledges that the primary responsibility for the
37 education of children within the state resides with their parents and that the role of state and
38 local governments is to support and assist parents in fulfilling that responsibility.

39 (2) (a) The Legislature finds that:

40 (i) quality teaching is the basic building block of successful schools and, outside of
41 home and family circumstances, the essential component of student achievement;

42 (ii) the high quality of teachers is absolutely essential to enhance student achievement
43 and to assure educational excellence in each classroom in the state's public schools; and

44 (iii) the implementation of a comprehensive continuum of data-driven strategies
45 regarding recruitment, preservice, licensure, induction, professional development, and
46 evaluation is essential if the state and its citizens expect every classroom to be staffed by a
47 skilled, caring, and effective teacher.

48 (b) In providing for the safe and effective performance of the function of educating
49 Utah's children, the Legislature further finds it to be of critical importance that education,
50 including instruction, administrative, and supervisory services, be recognized as a profession,
51 and that those who are licensed or seek to become licensed and to serve as educators:

52 (i) meet high standards both as to qualifications and fitness for service as educators
53 through quality recruitment and preservice programs [~~before assuming their responsibilities in~~
54 ~~the schools~~] designed to provide opportunities to demonstrate competency in a school
55 classroom setting;

56 (ii) maintain those standards in the performance of their duties while holding licenses,
57 in large part through participating in induction and ongoing professional development
58 programs focused on instructional improvement;

59 (iii) receive fair, systematic evaluations of their performance at school for the purpose
60 of enhancing the quality of public education and student achievement; and

61 (iv) have access to a process for fair examination and review of allegations made
62 against them and for the administration of appropriate sanctions against those found, in
63 accordance with due process, to have failed to conduct themselves in a manner commensurate
64 with their authority and responsibility to provide appropriate professional services to the
65 children of the state.

66 Section 2. Section **53E-6-301** is amended to read:

67 **53E-6-301. Qualifications of applicants for licenses -- Changes in qualifications.**

68 (1) As used in this section:

69 (a) "Literacy preparation assessment" means an examination that evaluates an
70 individual's knowledge of the science of reading, related to literacy instruction for an individual
71 who teaches preschool, elementary school, or special education.

72 (b) "Required literacy preparation assessment" means a literacy preparation assessment
73 that the state board uses to determine the qualifications of license applicants.

74 (2) The state board shall establish by rule made in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter
75 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act[~~;~~];

76 (a) the scholarship, competencies, training, and experience required of license
77 applicants[~~;~~]; and

78 (b) the criteria and training for an individual who certifies a licensure candidate's
79 demonstration of competencies.

80 (3) (a) The state board shall announce any increase in the requirements when made.

81 (b) An increase in requirements shall become effective not less than one year from the
82 date of the announcement.

83 (4) The state board may determine by examination or otherwise the qualifications of
84 license applicants.

85 (5) If the state board uses a required literacy preparation assessment under Subsection
86 (4):

87 (a) (i) the state board shall make rules to allow an LEA to hire a license applicant who
88 does not successfully pass the required literacy preparation assessment for a limited duration
89 pending successful passage; and

90 (ii) the license applicant is not eligible for a professional educator license described in
91 Section 53E-6-201 until the license applicant successfully passes the required literacy
92 preparation assessment; and

93 (b) the state board may make rules in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah
94 Administrative Rulemaking Act, to:

95 (i) establish exemptions for the required literacy preparation assessment; and

96 (ii) develop a pathway to demonstrate early literacy competency as an exception to the
97 requirement to pass the required literacy preparation assessment.

98 Section 3. Section 53E-6-302 is amended to read:

99 **53E-6-302. Educator preparation programs.**

100 (1) As used in this section:

101 (a) "Educator preparation program" means:

102 (i) a university teacher education program; or

103 (ii) a program that prepares individuals using an alternative pathway to licensure, as the
104 state board provides, that does not include content or time requirements that conflict with the
105 content or time requirements described in rule made by the state board in accordance with
106 Subsection (2).

107 (b) "Required literacy preparation assessment" means the same as that term is defined
108 in Section 53E-6-301.

109 (c) "University teacher preparation program" means a program that an institution of
110 higher education offers to prepare educators for licensure.

111 (2) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the
112 state board shall make rules that establish standards for approval of an educator preparation
113 program.

114 (3) The state board shall ensure that standards adopted under Subsection (2):

115 (a) meet or exceed generally recognized national standards for preparation of
116 educators; and

117 (b) include requirements for educator preparation programs to:

118 (i) provide instruction in the science of reading; and

119 (ii) prepare license applicants to pass the required literacy preparation assessment at no
120 cost to the applicants for the preparation, including providing ongoing preparation for up to

- 121 three total attempts of the required literacy preparation assessment.
- 122 (4) The state board shall designate an employee of the state board's staff to:
- 123 (a) work with education deans of state institutions of higher education to coordinate
- 124 university teacher preparation programs that may include:
- 125 (i) monitoring courses for university teacher preparation programs; and
- 126 (ii) working with course instructors for university teacher preparation programs;
- 127 (b) act as a liaison between:
- 128 (i) the state board;
- 129 (ii) local school boards or charter school governing boards; and
- 130 (iii) representatives of university teacher preparation programs; and
- 131 (c) report the employee's findings and recommendations for the improvement of
- 132 teacher preparation programs to:
- 133 (i) the state board; and
- 134 (ii) education deans of state institutions of higher education.
- 135 (5) The state board shall:
- 136 (a) in good faith, consider the findings and recommendations described in Subsection
- 137 (4)(c); and
- 138 (b) in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
- 139 make rules, as the state board determines is necessary, to implement recommendations
- 140 described in Subsection (4)(c).
- 141 (6) Subject to legislative appropriations, the Utah Board of Higher Education shall:
- 142 (a) provide matching funds to each of the state's institutions of higher education with a
- 143 university teacher preparation program:
- 144 (i) to hire an additional faculty member who has training in the science of reading and
- 145 the science of reading instruction; and
- 146 (ii) in an amount equal to 75% of the cost of making the hire described in Subsection
- 147 (6)(a) if the institution provides 25% of the cost; and
- 148 (b) consult the state superintendent regarding:
- 149 (i) criteria for the hire described in Subsection (6)(a) that would qualify for a
- 150 distribution of funding; and
- 151 (ii) an individual institution's fulfillment of the criteria described in Subsection

152 (6)(b)(i) before distributing funding.

153 (7) An institution that hires an additional faculty member shall coordinate with the
154 science of reading panel described in Section 53E-3-1003 to include two members of the panel
155 in the institution's hiring process.

156 (8) The state board shall:

157 (a) monitor accreditation of university programs regarding the science of reading
158 preparation described in Subsection (3)(b) at the institutions described in Subsection (6)(a); and

159 (b) (i) develop strategies to provide support for preparation programs with low rates of
160 passage on the required literacy preparation assessment; and

161 (ii) provide increasing levels of support to a preparation program with low rates of
162 passage on the required literacy preparation assessment for two consecutive years.

163 Section 4. Section 53E-6-902 is amended to read:

164 **53E-6-902. Teacher leaders.**

165 (1) As used in this section, "teacher" means an educator who has an assignment to
166 teach in a classroom.

167 (2) There is created the role of a teacher leader to:

168 (a) work with a student teacher and a teacher who supervises a student teacher;

169 (b) assist with the training of a recently hired teacher; [~~and~~]

170 (c) support school-based professional learning[.]; and

171 (d) certify the demonstration of competencies for an applicant seeking licensure
172 through a preparation program.

173 (3) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the
174 state board shall make rules that:

175 (a) define the role of a teacher leader, including the functions described in Subsection
176 (2); and

177 (b) establish the minimum criteria for a teacher to qualify as a teacher leader.

178 (4) The state board shall solicit recommendations from school districts and educators
179 regarding:

180 (a) appropriate resources to provide a teacher leader; and

181 (b) appropriate ways to compensate a teacher leader.

182 Section 5. Section 53G-11-509 is amended to read:

183 **53G-11-509. Mentor for provisional educator.**

184 (1) In accordance with [Subsections] Section 53E-6-902, Subsection 53E-2-302(7), and
185 Subsections 53E-6-103(2)(a) and (b), the principal or immediate supervisor of a provisional
186 educator shall assign a person who has received training or will receive training in mentoring
187 educators as a mentor to the provisional educator.

188 (2) Where possible, the mentor shall be a career educator who performs substantially
189 the same duties as the provisional educator and has at least three years of educational
190 experience.

191 (3) The mentor shall assist the provisional educator to become effective and competent
192 in the teaching profession and school system, but may not serve as an evaluator of the
193 provisional educator.

194 (4) An educator who is assigned as a mentor may receive compensation for those
195 services in addition to the educator's regular salary.

196 **Section 6. Effective date.**

197 This bill takes effect on May 1, 2024.