

Teacher Licensing, Evaluation, and Use of Third Party Vendors

Licensing Guidance

Pursuant to T.C.A. §§ 49-5-101 and 49-5-403, State Board of Education (SBE) rule [0520-02-03](#), and SBE [Educator Licensure Policy 5.502](#) no person shall be employed as a principal, teacher (including school services personnel), or supervisor of any public elementary or high school by any local education agency (LEA), or receive any pay for such services out of the public school funds of the LEA, until the person presents to the director of schools a valid license as prescribed by the State Board. Each educator shall be individually responsible for securing a license, verifying its accuracy, maintaining its validity, registering it with the employing board of education, and meeting the requirements of T.C.A. § 49-5-101.

As such, school districts and charter schools must ensure that all educators hold a Tennessee license for the grade span and content area in which they are providing instruction. This includes educators provided by a third party vendor for the purpose of providing virtual or in-person instruction. Districts should reference [Course Management and Access](#) resources to determine endorsements an educator must hold to teach assigned courses.

Districts seeking to employ a licensed educator to teach more than two sections of a course outside of their area of endorsement must apply for an Employment Standards Waiver. Districts unable to recruit a properly licensed educator may consider applying for a Permit. Employment Standards Waivers and Permits may not be issued if the educator will be teaching K-12 Special Education courses, a course with an End-of-Course assessment, or Elementary Physical Education (major portion). Additional information about both Permits and Employment Standards Waivers can be found in the [Educator Licensure Operating Procedures for Districts](#).

Recently, the SBE adopted policies that increase flexibility for educators who are licensed in another state to obtain a licensed to teach in Tennessee. Additional information about the various pathways to licensure as an out of state applicant can be found [here](#).

Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Guidance

Additionally, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-302, SBE rule [0520-02-01](#), and SBE [Teacher and Administrator](#)

[Evaluation Policy 5.201](#), local boards of education and charter schools shall adopt and implement an approved evaluation model for teachers and school administrators. This includes all licensed educators employed by the school district or charter school and all licensed educators provided by a third party vendor for the purpose of providing virtual or in-person instruction.

As such, districts and charters must ensure that all licensed educators employed by the district or charter or provided by contract with a third party vendor are evaluated in accordance with all requirements outlined in [Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Policy 5.201](#).

The following guidance includes teachers employed by the school district or charter school and those provided by a third party vendor. Topic specific information may be accessed on the [TEAM website](#).

- All licensed educators in Tennessee public schools and charter school must meet observation pacing.
- All licensed educators in Tennessee public schools and charter schools must complete growth and achievement measure selections.
- All educators providing instruction in a tested subject or grade level must complete the teacher-student claiming process (roster verification).
- All licensed educators must participate in all evaluation flexibility options chosen by the school district or charter school, such as but not limited to evaluation pacing, alternative growth measure (portfolio and portfolio alternatives) implementation, and observation tool implementation.
- All licensed educators are subject to Partial Year Exemption (PYE) status.

The department encourages each school district or charter school to consult with its local attorney for specific legal advice regarding teacher licensing, teacher accountability, and the use of third party vendor instruction. You may send questions regarding this document to TEAM.Questions@tn.gov.