

LICENSURE UPDATE

New teacher licensure guidelines will hit charters next year

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Ohio's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan places emphasis on "assuring a high-quality teacher in every classroom." This language and concept replaces the former "HQT" terminology and its requirements that became familiar to schools under the former No Child Left Behind Act. Ohio's requirements under the "high-quality teacher" language become effective July 1, 2019. The new requirements will significantly affect how charter schools staff their schools.

Since the beginning of charter schools in Ohio, one allowable latitude in law has been the ability to employ teachers with long-term substitute licenses. As of July 1, this allowance will no longer exist. In order to be employed and legally compensated as a teacher in a charter school, teachers will need to hold standard or resident educator licensure. The specific directive by the Office for Community Schools reads as follows:

*Effective July 1, 2019, school districts, **community schools** and STEM schools are prohibited from employing teachers of core subject areas unless they are "properly certified or licensed teachers." Per the statute, being properly certified or licensed means the teacher has completed all certification or licensure requirements applicable to the subject, grades and type of students being taught. (ODE, August 2018)*

Schools need to begin *now* to prepare for a change that will affect current employees holding either long-term substitute or international licenses. The change does not mean that these teachers necessarily have to leave their schools. But the change does mean teachers with these credentials must pursue an acceptable form of licensure under ESSA in order to remain employed in their schools.

The Ohio Department of Education now offers teachers a pathway to alternative resident educator licenses. This pathway is a viable option for most candidates who have content knowledge or successful career and life experience in their teaching assignment area. Many of these candidates currently hold long-term substitute licenses.

Current faculty who may be eligible for alternative resident educator licenses should begin taking steps *now*. These steps involve requesting an alternative educator license review, taking the licensure test in the assigned area, enrolling in an approved alternative licensure institute, receiving a statement of eligibility, applying for the alternative license, and then following a series of steps over the next few years to progress toward standard licensure.

The steps are more fully described on ODE's website:

<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Licensure/Resident-License-Options/Alternative-Resident-Educator-Licenses>

The following guidance document may also assist schools in determining which form of licensure may be most accessible to teachers: <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Licensure/Licensure-Update/Proper-Certification-Guidance.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

For further technical assistance, schools are advised to contact their regional representative from the Office of Educator Licensure. Many schools have already found these regional contacts helpful in resolving individual licensure issues.