

1 State of Arkansas
2 90th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2015
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1651

5 By: Representatives Ratliff, Baltz
6 By: Senator B. Pierce
7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO AMEND THE PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
10 CONCERNING TEACHER LICENSURE; TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF
11 THE ARKANSAS CODE CONCERNING TEACHER PREPARATION
12 PROGRAMS; TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
13 CONCERNING EDUCATOR ETHICS VIOLATIONS; AND FOR OTHER
14 PURPOSES.
15

Subtitle

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18 TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
19 CONCERNING TEACHER LICENSURE, TEACHER
20 PREPARATION PROGRAMS, AND EDUCATOR ETHICS
21 VIOLATIONS.
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23

24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
25

26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1004(c)(2)(A) and (B), concerning
27 professional development for licensed teachers, are amended to read as
28 follows:

29 (2)(A) For purposes of the requirement for continuing education
30 and professional development under ~~this section, a three-hour graduate-level~~
31 ~~college credit course shall be counted as fifteen (15) hours of the~~
32 ~~professional development hours required for teachers under the Standards for~~
33 Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, five (5) hours
34 of credit for professional development shall be given for each one (1) hour
35 of college credit for a graduate-level course if the college credit is:

36 (i) Related to and enhances the teacher's knowledge



1 of the subject area in which the teacher is currently teaching;

2 (ii) Part of the requirements for the teacher to
 3 obtain additional licensure in a subject matter that has been designated by
 4 the Department of Education as having a critical shortage of teachers; or

5 (iii) Otherwise approved by the department under
 6 subdivision (c)(2)(B) of this section as a graduate level course eligible for
 7 professional development credit.

8 (B)(i) Credit for professional development obtained under
 9 subdivision (c)(2)(A) of this section may be allocated as follows:

10 (a) Up to fifteen (15) hours may be credited
 11 to the professional development requirements for licensure; and

12 (b) Hours obtained in excess of fifteen (15)
 13 may be credited to any remaining requirements for professional development
 14 generally, if approved by the school district in a professional development
 15 plan.

16 (ii) The allocation of ~~Any~~ credit for professional
 17 development claimed under subdivision (c)(2)(A) of this section shall be
 18 approved by the ~~department:~~

19 (a) School district or public charter school
 20 employing the teacher; or

21 (b) Department, if the educator is not
 22 employed by a school district or public charter school.

23
 24 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-17-301, concerning the employment of
 25 licensed personnel in public schools, is amended to add an additional
 26 subsection to read as follows:

27 (c)(1) An individual whose license is suspended or revoked by the
 28 State Board of Education for a disqualifying offense under § 6-17-410 or an
 29 ethical violation under § 6-17-428 is not eligible to be employed at a school
 30 district, public school, or public charter school, including as a substitute
 31 teacher whether directly employed by the school district or public charter
 32 school or providing substitute teaching services under contract with an
 33 outside entity.

34 (2) The restriction in this subsection shall expire upon the
 35 expiration of the term of a suspension of the license.

36 (3) The employment of a person in violation of this subsection

1 is a violation of the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools
2 and School Districts.

3
4 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-17-402(d), concerning a waiver of the
5 examination requirements for licensure by reciprocity, is amended to read as
6 follows:

7 (d) The State Board of Education shall waive the examination
8 requirements under subsection (b) of this section for ~~individuals~~ an
9 individual applying for ~~licensure in a first-time~~ Arkansas license who ~~have~~
10 has a valid out-of-state teaching license and three (3) years' documented
11 teaching experience as required by the rules promulgated by the State Board
12 of Education.

13
14 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-17-403(c)(5) - (7), concerning a
15 provisional license for teachers trained out-of-state, are amended to read as
16 follows:

17 (5) ~~Reports evidencing passing test scores on the appropriate~~
18 ~~basic skills assessment mandated by the state board for educator licensure or~~
19 ~~its substantial equivalent, unless the individual has three (3) years of~~
20 ~~documented teaching experience;~~

21 (6) Completion of a program for:

22 (A) Teacher education at a nationally or regionally
23 accredited institution of higher education;

24 (B) Teacher education nationally accredited by ~~the National~~
25 ~~Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, Teacher Education~~
26 Accreditation Council, an accrediting organization recognized by the United
27 States Department of Education, the Council for Higher Education
28 Accreditation, or the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation;
29 or

30 (C) Certification from the National Board for Professional
31 Teaching Standards; and

32 (7) ~~(6)~~ Payment of applicable licensure fees.

33
34 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-17-409(c), concerning the nontraditional
35 licensure program, is amended to read as follows:

36 (c)(1) The state board shall promulgate rules and regulations to

1 determine eligibility for and amount of awards of the grants concerning the
 2 operation of the nontraditional licensure program authorized by this section
 3 and for such other purposes as may be necessary in carrying out the intent of
 4 this section.

5 (2) The department may refuse to admit for enrollment in the
 6 nontraditional licensure program administered by the department a person who
 7 has been dismissed from a teacher education program at an institution of
 8 higher education.

9
 10 SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-17-409(e)(3), concerning provisional
 11 licensure for an applicant enrolled in an accelerated teaching program, is
 12 amended to read as follows:

13 (3)(A) The state board shall issue to an applicant who is in an
 14 accelerated teaching program a provisional teaching license that is issued
 15 under the rules governing provisional licensure for nontraditional licensure
 16 applicants.

17 (B) The provisional license is valid for the entire period
 18 that the applicant is:

19 ~~(A)(i)~~ Participating in the accelerated teaching program;

20 and

21 ~~(B)(ii)~~ Teaching in an Arkansas public school.

22
 23 SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 6-17-418(a) and (b), concerning the
 24 Arkansas history requirement for teacher licensure, is amended to read as
 25 follows:

26 (a) A person shall not be licensed as a social studies teacher or as an
 27 elementary school teacher unless the person has successfully completed:

28 (1) For a person seeking a traditional first-time license, at
 29 least three (3) college-credit hours of college-course work in Arkansas
 30 history at an accredited institution of higher education; or

31 (2) For a person seeking licensure through a nontraditional
 32 program, by reciprocity, or by adding an endorsement, documentation of the
 33 successful completion of:

34 (A) Three (3) college credit-hours in Arkansas history at
 35 an accredited institution of higher education; or

36 (B) A forty-five (45) hour professional development piece

1 in Arkansas history offered through Arkansas IDEAS.

2 (b) However, social studies teachers and elementary school teachers
3 entering Arkansas from another state shall receive a one-year nonrenewable
4 provisional license to teach in Arkansas schools as authorized by § 6-17-403,
5 during which the person shall complete the Arkansas history requirement under
6 this section.

7
8 SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 6-17-419(a), concerning the renewal of an
9 expired teaching license, is amended to read as follows:

10 (a)(1) ~~Any A person who held a valid teaching license prior to January~~
11 ~~1, 1988, holds an Arkansas teaching license that is expired for more than one~~
12 (1) year, who obtained the license before state-mandated licensure
13 assessments were required by law and by rule for licensure and who has less
14 than three (3) years of teaching experience shall be allowed to renew that
15 teaching license by ~~meeting:~~

16 (A) Passing the content-area assessment for the requested
17 license;

18 (B) Providing evidence of the completion of the annual
19 professional development requirement for licensure, including the
20 professional development required under § 6-17-409; and

21 (C) Completing the general renewal requirements that are
22 applicable to renewal for all other license holders and shall not be required
23 to take a basic skills test, to take the National Teacher Examination, or to
24 fulfill any other requirement that is not also required of all other teachers
25 for license renewal.

26 (2) ~~Any A person who held a valid teaching license prior to~~
27 ~~January 1, 1988, seeking renewal of an expired license under this section~~
28 shall be entitled to a provisional license by meeting the general
29 requirements that are applicable to all other persons seeking a provisional
30 license.

31
32 SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 6-17-422(h)(2)(B)(ii) and (iii), concerning
33 audits of teacher preparation programs, are amended to read as follows:

34 (ii) The audits shall be conducted on a ~~five-year~~
35 seven-year cycle beginning on July 1, ~~2007~~ 2016, and provided to the
36 Professional Licensure Standards Board.

1 (iii)(a) Institutions of higher education that do not
 2 comply with the Department of Education's audit findings and recommendations
 3 shall have ~~one (1) semester~~ two (2) full semesters to provide to the
 4 Department of Education for its review and approval a plan to bring programs
 5 into compliance with the audit recommendations and submit documentation of
 6 compliance to the Professional Licensure Standards Board by the end of the
 7 next full academic year following the date of the plan approval.

8 (b) If the institution of higher education does
 9 not bring its program into compliance with audit recommendations, the
 10 Professional Licensure Standards Board shall submit a recommendation to the
 11 State Board of Education for discontinuance of the authority of the
 12 institution to offer the licensure program; and

13
 14 SECTION 10. Arkansas Code § 6-17-428(a)(2), concerning definitions
 15 related to ethical violations, is amended to read as follows:

16 (2) "Educator" means ~~a~~:

17 (A) A person holding a valid Arkansas ~~teacher's or~~
 18 standard teaching license, ancillary license, provisional license, technical
 19 permit, or administrator's license issued by the State Board of Education; or

20 (B) A preservice teacher;

21
 22 SECTION 11. Arkansas Code § 6-17-428(a), concerning definitions
 23 related to ethical violations, is amended to add an additional subdivision to
 24 read as follows:

25 (5) "Preservice teacher" means an unlicensed person who is
 26 enrolled as a student in an educator preparation program.

27
 28 SECTION 12. Arkansas Code § 6-17-428(c), concerning the duties of the
 29 ethics subcommittee of the Professional Licensure Standards Board, is amended
 30 to read as follows:

31 (c)(1) The ethics subcommittee of the Professional Licensure Standards
 32 Board shall:

33 (A)(i) Receive and investigate ethics complaints.

34 (ii) The ethics subcommittee shall not accept a
 35 facsimile or electronic signature on a complaint form, but shall require that
 36 a complaint form bear the original signature of the complainant;

1 (B) Enforce the code of ethics by:

2 (i) Making a recommendation to the State Board of
3 Education for:

4 (a) A written warning, a written reprimand, or
5 the written placement of conditions or restrictions on the activities of the
6 educator; or

7 (b) The revocation, suspension, probation, ~~or~~
8 nonrenewal, or denial of a license issued by the State Board of Education; or

9 (ii) Issuing a private letter of caution; and

10 (C) Dismiss an ethics complaint if it finds there is no
11 ethics violation.

12 (2) For a preservice teacher assigned to a public school as a
13 student intern in a supervised field experience or supervised clinical
14 experience, a sanction adopted by the State Board of Education may be imposed
15 on a license when it is issued to a preservice teacher.

16 (3) The ethics subcommittee may appoint or contract for one (1)
17 or more persons to conduct evidentiary hearings.

18 (4) The State Board of Education may make an informal
19 disposition of the ethical violation by stipulation, settlement, consent
20 order, or default.

21
22 SECTION 13. Arkansas Code § 6-17-428(f)(1), concerning the timeline
23 for ethics violations proceedings, is amended to read as follows:

24 (f)(1) Within ten (10) ~~calendar~~ business days of authorizing an ethics
25 complaint investigation, the ethics subcommittee shall provide to the
26 educator under investigation:

27 (A) Written notice of the investigation and the nature of
28 the alleged ethical violation; and

29 (B) A copy of:

30 (i) The documents and evidence provided by the
31 complainant concerning the facts alleged in the ethics complaint;

32 (ii) Provisions of this section or other state
33 statutory law applicable to an ethical violation under this section; and

34 (iii) The applicable rules in effect at the time the
35 ethics complaint is filed.

36

1 SECTION 14. Arkansas Code § 6-17-428, concerning ethical violations,
 2 is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

3 (q) Subject to the disclosure limitations of subsections (m) and (o)
 4 of this section, the department may include on the department's public
 5 website for licensure the following information on each violation of the code
 6 of ethics by an educator upon which the State Board of Education has
 7 suspended, revoked, denied, or non-renewed a license based on the
 8 recommendations of the ethics subcommittee:

- 9 (1) The code of ethics standard that was violated;
- 10 (2) The sanction approved by the State Board of Education; and
- 11 (3) A copy of the final order of the State Board of Education.

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