



Wisconsin State Reading Association

WSRA... providing leadership, advocacy, and expertise

Wisconsin Educator Licensure Change: Facts, Concerns, and Questions

WSRA Legislative and Advocacy Committees

On September 21, 2017, the 2017-2019 biennial budget (2017 Wisconsin Act 59) became law. Act 59 created lifetime licenses for teachers, administrators, and pupil services professionals reversing the 1983 law requiring educators to show evidence of ongoing professional development every five years to maintain licensure.

What Do We Know At This Time?

Current Professional and Master Educator License Holders:

Teachers who hold a current professional or master educator license will automatically have their license converted to a lifetime license. DPI will simply remove the expiration date from these licenses.

Current Initial Educator License Holders:

Those currently holding or applying for an initial educator license will be issued a three-year provisional license. After six semesters, an educator may apply for a lifetime license by submitting an application to the DPI that includes a school board signature verifying that the applicant has completed six semesters of successful teaching. If the applicant has not met the requirements, the applicant can reapply for a provisional license as many times as necessary.

Where Can the Latest Licensing News Be Found?

Definitive licensure changes are posted at <https://dpi.wi.gov/tepd1>

What Concerns Exist?

- Diminished teacher expertise and less incentive for continued education
- Adverse impact on teachers, student learning, and equity
- Shifting licensure control to administrators
- Undesirable effect on families and communities
- Inadequate response to address the teacher shortage issue

What is the Position of the Wisconsin State Reading Association?

WSRA is concerned about the licensure changes and the impact these changes could have on literacy educators and Wisconsin students. WSRA takes seriously its stated belief that expertise matters. It understands the critical need for maintaining high quality teachers to address the Wisconsin student achievement gap and to ensure student academic success and overall well-being. Considering what is at stake, the licensure changes appear to be a short-term fix for teacher shortage concerns that could result in long-term problems for Wisconsin students and the teaching profession, including literacy educators. In light of these changes, in an era where student needs are growing and district resources are dwindling, the need for all Wisconsin educators to take professional responsibility for their own learning has never been greater.

What are the Professional Learning Opportunities Available within WSRA that can Help Enhance Teacher Expertise and Ensure High Quality Teaching?

WSRA provides many forums for educators, schools, and districts to use in promoting professional learning, including the following:

- Annual convention with internationally-known speakers providing insights and ideas on a variety of topics for educators from early childhood to adult literacy programs
- Day-long institutes on focused topics with expert presenters
- Local council meetings and events
- Literacy publications including newsletter, journal, monographs, and other media
- Leadership meetings and additional networking opportunities

Resources on Teacher Expertise

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999, December). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Goodwin, A.L., & Hammerness, K. (2017). *Empowered Educators: How High Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World*. National Center on Education and the Economy.

Fetler, M. (1999, March). High school staff characteristics and mathematics test results. *Education Policy Analysis Archive*, 7(9).

Podolsky, A., Kinl, T., Bishop, J., Darling-Hammond, L. (Sept. 15, 2016). *Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators*. Learning Policy Institute.

What Makes a Teacher EFFECTIVE: A Summary of Key Research Findings on Teacher Preparation (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education -- NCATE, 2017) <http://www.ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JFRrmWqa1jU%3d&tabid=361>

For a more extensive discussion of these issues, please consult the WSRA Document Wisconsin Educator Licensure Change: Facts, Concerns, and Questions on the WSRA website at www.wsra.org.