

Teacher Licensure and Teacher Quality

- 1. We want every child in every classroom to have the best possible teacher.**
Teacher quality is very important; no other measured factor in schools is nearly as important in determining student achievement. The variability in learning associated with high and low quality teachers is quite substantial: some teachers produce 1½ years of gain in achievement in an academic year while others with equivalent students produce only ½ year of gain (Hanushek, 1992; Hanushek and Rivkin, 2010).
- 2. Our teachers are doing a good job, but what we are asking of them has changed.** To teach 21st century skills, many teachers need to shift aspects of their teaching practice. To meet this challenge, they need frequent, high-quality feedback and job-embedded opportunities to grow.
- 3. VT spends over \$1.4 billion a year on education. Some 80% of that pays for staff. We have a compelling state interest in ensuring that we support and develop teacher quality.**
- 4. Historically, states have attempted to ensure teacher quality through licensure. In VT, licensure and relicensure are the only levers the state has to ensure a minimum of quality** and continuous professional learning and development by teachers.
- 5. More recent efforts to ensure teacher quality include use of value-added measures of teacher effectiveness and standards-based observations that capture evidence of teacher strategies and observed impact on students.** A small but growing body research suggests the latter approach is more useful as a tool for supporting improvements in teaching and learning.
- 6. Many states and local districts have built or are building systems that require and support teachers' continuous professional growth:**
“Because professional development is a significant factor for improving student learning, states must examine how their relicensure policies align with their standards for effective professional learning and how they can leverage relicensure

policies to advance school improvement and increase student achievement.
(Advancing High-quality Professional Learning Through Collective Bargaining and State Policy, The American Federation of Teachers, the Council of Chief State School Officers, The National Education Association, and the National Staff Development Council, p. 45)

The current proposal seeks to “streamline” processes for relicensure, but does not address policies that would provide frequent formative feedback to teachers and support systematic improvements in teaching practice.

7. In a state with 30% principal turnover annually, and an estimated 30% of districts that do not systematically evaluate teachers, we cannot rely only on local principals to ensure teacher quality. We need to support principals by providing systems and support they can draw on to collaborate with teachers on instructional improvements.

Recommendations:

- That the AOE work with the NEA and the VT Standards Board to develop language that supports a robust model for teacher evaluation and feedback, focused on continuous improvement of learning.
- That the AOE work with the NEA and the VT Standards Board to streamline the relicensure process.
- That the AOE develop a Balance Accountability Model that gathers data on teacher effectiveness using multiple measures, including standards-based observations, surveys of parents and students, test scores and student work samples. This model will be based in part on the work of the Vermont Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Task Force, which included strong representation from the NEA.
- That districts whose own teacher support and development processes model or exceed those of the AOE model may request permission to continue with their locally developed model, but other districts are required to adopt the AOE model.
- That the AOE work with the VPA and the PLN and institutions of higher education, including VSC, to help principals develop and maintain more robust systems of support and feedback, so that teachers can improve their professional practice.