

Testimony for the Senate Education Committee

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Questions We Will Address

- Why do states license teachers? What would happen if we didn't?
- How can people earn licenses in Vermont?
- How does the AOE intersect with school systems around hiring and staffing?
- What is the current state of educator evaluation in Vermont?
- What are AOE's plans for supporting improved educator evaluation in Vermont?

Every state licenses educators

- Historical- Teacher and leader positions used to be appointed by superintendents to political benefactors- licensing started to curb abuses that resulted
- Quality Assurance- Ensures that educators meet minimum qualifications such as having a BA/BS, basic skills, and are safe to be in front of children
- Federal Compliance- Most federal grants require states to validate teacher qualifications, the easiest way to do this is through licensing.

Virtually every state licenses teachers through an AOE equivalent

- Ease of Superintendents/SU/SD to interact with people dedicated to schools
- Higher demand for protection from harm than other professions
- Ease of AOE to interact with institutes of higher education, school systems, testing companies and other State AOE teams
- High demand for data access related to teacher quality for federal and grant reporting
- Regulations related to teacher licensing frequently come through national organizations/USDE and are embedded in work that the AOE stays abreast of

If we don't license teachers...

- Jeopardize federal funding- Title I and Title II require evidence that we are improving student access to highly qualified educators, we can't meet the requirement if we don't license teachers.
- Jeopardize public confidence in educator quality: Currently the public can determine if the teachers of their children meet minimum qualification and they can lodge complaints against educators who act inappropriately; these avenues would be closed

Type of License

Emergency

Apprenticeship

Provisional

Level I

Level II

Retired

Term

1 Year

2 Years

2 Years

3 Years

5 Years

5 Years

Federal Assessment

Generally Unqualified

Generally Qualified

Type of License

Emergency

Apprenticeship

Provisional

Requirements

Superintendent's
Recommendation

Commitment to earn License

BA/BS in related field

Commitment to mentoring

Clear criminal record check

Fees (\$40 per year of license)

Understanding Licenses

- **License**- The authorization to work in our schools ex. Level I or Retired
- **Endorsements**- The specific fields of work a person can be placed in under their license; there is no limit to how many endorsements an educator can have- ex. English or Elementary
- **Level**- The specific grade/age levels with which a licensee can work. Ex. Early childhood (Birth-Grade 3) or Secondary (Grade 7-8)
- **Limit**- Sometimes a license is limited- for example a Social Studies licensee may be limited to World and US history and precluded from Geography, Economics, etc.
- **Status**- Whether or not a license is active or not

License Type	Endorsement	Instructional Level	Subject Limit	Grade Limit	Status	Expiration Date
I- Professional Educator License (Level I)	90 (Superintendent)	3 (Grades PK-12)	None	None	License Expired	06/30/2008
II- Professional Educator License (Level II)	00 (Elementary Education)	1 (Grades K-6)	None	None	Currently Licensed	06/30/2019
	76 (Reading/English Language Arts Specialist)	1 (Grades K-6)	None	None	Dropped by Educator	06/30/2012
	91 (Principal)	1 (Grades K-6)	None	None	License Expired	06/30/2005
	91 (Principal)	3 (Grades PK-12)	None	None	Currently Licensed	06/30/2019

Ways to earn Level I License

Traditional Path

- Enroll in a *full education preparation program (accredited)* in Vermont or in a state with which we have reciprocity agreement (may be a university or alternative certification program)
- Pay for courses to the institution, no fee beyond license to AOE

Transcript Review/ Academic Review

- Submit courses taken at a variety of universities/colleges which meet the core requirements for the endorsement
- Pay for courses to the institution, no fee beyond license to AOE

Peer Review

- Submit a portfolio of experiences, courses and work which is reviewed by peers with the endorsement sought.
- Pay \$1200 for review to AOE and license fees

AOE and School Intersections

- *Current*
 - Limited role for AOE in Hiring
 - May validate licenses of applicants
 - May share information pertaining to background checks, other licensing actions
 - Conduct investigations of educators who act improperly
 - May restrict or revoke licenses
 - May clear educators of charges- impartial 3rd party investigation

AOE and School Intersections

- *Future*
 - Additional role for AOE in Hiring
 - Help systems identify locally unemployed licensees in areas of need
 - Conduct investigations of educators who act improperly
 - Continue same efforts

Licensing vs. Evaluation

Licensing

- *Verification* an educator has met *minimum criteria*
- Pre-requisite to be *eligible* to work
- State responsibility

Evaluation

- *Assessment* of an *educator's performance* in the work
- Promotes professional growth
- Determines if you *continue to work* in your current job
- Supervisor's responsibility

Current State of Evaluation

- Educator Evaluation

- 2012 State Board of Education adopted *The Vermont Guidelines for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness*, the guiding principles are summarized here

1. Evaluation **should** be a collaborative endeavor between the supervisor and employee.
2. Educators **should** be evaluated against clear standards and with opportunities for feedback prior to summative evaluation.
3. If an educator cannot meet standards with support, they **should** be removed from their positions.
4. Evaluation results **should** inform other systems to leverage resources.
5. Those being evaluated **should** play a role in shaping the evaluation process.
6. Student achievement **should** play a role in evaluation decisions.
7. Evaluation systems **should** be locally developed with hiring decisions made locally.
8. Evaluations **should** be conducted by trained and objective supervisors.
9. Resources for implementation and training of all staff **should** be adequate to the task.

Current State of Evaluation

- Link to Research

- Evaluation systems fail when they are executed poorly or inconsistently
- In all evaluation settings, employees' participation in their evaluation is related to the likelihood of trusting the results and engaging in growth
- An important characteristic of a good evaluation system is the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the employee
- There are specific skills evaluators need and these take resources and time to develop

Current State of Evaluation

- Teacher Evaluation in Vermont
 - 80% based on observation and some form of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*
 - Negotiated between each bargaining unit and its administration; embedded in contracts
 - Lack of evidence that teachers are receiving evaluations as intended by the systems in place
 - Principals see evaluation systems as overly complex, labor intensive given their other work duties
 - Teachers report evaluations are not helpful, don't help them grow or aren't carried out
 - Multiple SU/SDs have invested resources to improve teacher evaluation practices

Current State of Evaluation

- Leader Evaluation in Vermont
 - Nearly 100% based on observation and some form of the ISLLC *Leadership Standards*
 - Frequently determined by the current superintendent, may not be recorded or documented in formal ways
 - Lack of evidence that leaders are receiving evaluations on a regular basis
 - Principals report evaluations are not conducted while Superintendents report they are
 - Under current statute, a Superintendent's assessment of a principal's performance for personnel decisions is not binding- actual practice varies by SU/SD and school boards can and do override Superintendents

Should we have a state-wide system?

- No, reasons not to
 - The further from the employee the system is made, the less it is trusted or considered useful
 - Disrupts current good efforts of many school systems; high political resistance to usurping local control
 - Would not address adequately poor implementation at the local level
 - Costly to launch- estimate needing a minimum of 30 days of training (5 days for 6 groups, at roughly \$2000 per day this is \$60,000)
 - Costly to monitor, would need a technology partner to implement data collection

Should we link evaluation to license renewals?

- No, reasons not to
 - Denying a license requires that absolute criteria have not been met and applied objectively and consistently to all applicants
 - Unless we can certify the evaluations are conducted in fair, objective ways, we put Vermont at risk for litigation and risk losing good teachers.
 - Disproportionately empowers supervisors, gives them more power over the employee than warranted.
 - An educator may be a poor fit for a particular school (low evaluation) but perform quite well in another school.
 - If we did it, we would need a state-wide system which we don't support either.

What are we doing to improve Educator Evaluation?

- Cataloguing our strengths and areas for growth
 - Spring 2015
 - Voluntary paper audit of SU/SD existing evaluation models for teachers and leaders
 - Based on superintendent input, we anticipate 60-70% of SU/SDs will submit teacher evaluation materials; 30-40% will submit leader evaluation materials
 - Evaluated against a common rubric
 - Feedback to each SU/SD detailing the strengths and weaknesses in each model
 - Specified improvement timeline as needed
 - Summer 2015
 - Produce state wide picture of the “state of teacher evaluation”
 - Launch of web platform to share promising models from the field including audit scores, forms, contract language, training materials and contact information
 - Spring 2016
 - Mandatory paper audit of SU/SD existing evaluation models for teachers and leaders

What are we doing to improve Educator Evaluation?

- Addressing known areas of growth
 - 2014-15
 - 8 day professional development opportunity for principals and superintendents relative to teacher evaluation and accurate ratings offered in partnership between AOE and VPA
 - Summer 2015
 - Launch on-line modules for principal training in teacher evaluation
 - Linked to Danielson Framework
 - Identifies and certifies key skills and rating accuracy
 - Free for the first 30 pilot principals
 - VPA Principal's Institute
 - Strand focused on refining principal skills for productive coaching conversations