



Friday, March 13, 2026

To: Rep. Theresa Wood, Chair of House Committee on Human Services
Rep. Peter Conlon, Chair of House Committee on Education

From: James W. Adams, Executive Director, NASDTEC

Subject: Considerations Regarding Use of the Term “Educator” in Vermont’s Proposed Early Childhood License Title

Cc: Zoie Saunders, Secretary of Education

I am writing to respectfully offer a consideration regarding the naming of the early childhood license currently being discussed in Vermont legislation. This letter is not intended to express opposition to Vermont’s efforts to expand and strengthen the early childhood workforce. Rather, it is meant to raise a potential concern related to the inclusion of the term “Educator” in the title of a license that may not require a bachelor’s degree.

Across the United States, state education agencies collaborate through the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and work to uphold the principles outlined in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement. All fifty states participate in this framework, which helps jurisdictions communicate licensure expectations clearly and supports professional mobility for those working in education.

The Interstate Agreement emphasizes several important principles. First, education is a regulated profession, and each jurisdiction establishes professional and ethical standards for preparation, licensure, and continuing development. Second, the agreement seeks to facilitate professional educator mobility by promoting a common vocabulary and shared understanding of licensure categories across jurisdictions.

Within the agreement, the term “Educator” is defined broadly as a licensed professional such as a teacher, administrator, or support professional who may be required by a jurisdiction to hold a license. In practice, however, the framework used by states typically associates educator licensure with the completion of an approved educator preparation program, which includes three minimum essential components:

- completion of a bachelor’s degree,
- supervised clinical practice, and
- a planned program of study.

Similarly, the agreement’s description of the Stages of Teacher Licensure consistently assumes the completion of at least a bachelor’s degree as a foundational element of educator preparation.

Because these definitions and expectations are widely used by states when interpreting licensure credentials from other jurisdictions, the use of the term “Educator” for a license that does not require a

bachelor's degree could unintentionally create confusion in interstate contexts. For example, an individual holding a Vermont license containing the term "Educator" may reasonably assume that their credential will be recognized as part of the educator licensure continuum in another state. However, because other jurisdictions rely on the bachelor's degree and approved preparation program as baseline indicators for educator licensure, that individual could encounter unexpected barriers when seeking employment or licensure elsewhere.

Additionally, the use of the term "Educator" in the license title could also create potential confusion within Vermont itself. Hiring managers or human resource personnel in school districts often review multiple types of licenses when filling open positions. If a credential labeled as an "Educator" license does not require a bachelor's degree, there is a possibility that a hiring manager could inadvertently assume it carries the same preparation expectations as other educator licenses and place an individual in a role that requires a license tied to a bachelor's degree and completion of an approved preparation program. While this situation may be rare, the similarity in terminology could increase the likelihood of misunderstanding during the hiring process.

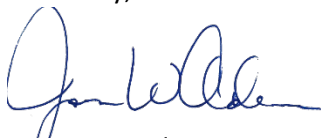
The NASDTEC Interstate Agreement specifically notes that licensure criteria differ among jurisdictions and that a license issued in one state is not automatically exchanged for a license in another. For this reason, the agreement places strong emphasis on maintaining a shared vocabulary when disseminating information nationally and internationally. Consistency in the use of terms such as "Educator" and "Teacher" helps states accurately interpret one another's licensure structures.

For these reasons, Vermont policymakers may wish to consider whether an alternative title—one that clearly distinguishes the credential from educator licenses that typically require a bachelor's degree and completion of an approved preparation program—might reduce potential confusion for individuals who later seek licensure in another jurisdiction, as well as for school districts responsible for hiring licensed professionals within the state.

Again, this observation is offered with respect for Vermont's authority to determine its own licensure pathways and with appreciation for the state's commitment to strengthening early childhood education. The intent is simply to highlight how terminology used within licensure titles can have implications beyond state borders and within the state itself, particularly for the very professionals the policy seeks to support.

Thank you for considering this perspective. I would be happy to provide additional information about the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement or interstate educator mobility if it would be helpful.

Sincerely,



James W. Adams
Executive Director
NASDTEC

