



As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create disruptions in our schools and districts, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education extends the emergency license to address staffing shortages in districts, educator preparation programs are well-positioned to provide support to educators and districts. According to employment data from SY2022-23, over 4,000 teachers were hired on an emergency license. This advisory articulates more flexible parameters for approved sponsoring organizations to provide licensure programming for employed educators seeking permanent licensure, such as emergency licensed educators and paraprofessionals. Please note, due to the end of the state's COVID-19 public health emergency on May 11, 2023, the Department's authority to issue emergency licenses will expire after November 7, 2023.

Emergency license holders and paraprofessionals bring varying degrees of content knowledge and/or educational attainment to their roles, and advancing to a more permanent license often requires a more customized route to meet individual educators' needs. Specifically, and consistent with licensure regulations, approved programs may allow for certain course or field-based requirements to be waived depending on an educator's prior coursework completion and school-based experience. The objective of any programmatic flexibilities would be to support these educators to advance to a provisional or initial license more efficiently.

### ***Flexibilities for Consideration***

#### *For Emergency Licensed Educators:*

- A Post-Baccalaureate program provides the content support to pass the required MTEL/Alternative Assessment(s) and the pedagogical knowledge support for effective classroom instruction.
  - o Previous courses and/or experience would be considered against the requirements of the initial program as currently approved.
  - o Some or all pre-practicum hours may be waived given an emergency license holder's employment on an emergency license.
  - o Up to ½ of the practicum hours may be waived given an emergency license holder's employment on an emergency license.

#### *For Paraprofessionals:*

- A Baccalaureate program supports paraprofessionals in earning their bachelor's degree, considering previous coursework attainment and experience in schools.
- A Post-Baccalaureate program for paraprofessionals with a bachelor's degree provides necessary supports and flexibilities, as described above for Emergency Licensed Educators.

This advisory promotes flexibility in the spirit of program innovation for approved preparation programs. We recognize and appreciate that some organizations have already begun discussions with districts in support of addressing the unprecedented staffing challenges they are facing. As SOs think about creating flexibilities in their programming, all waivers and course substitutions must continue to be documented in alignment with existing or new waiver policies, as currently required.

In alignment with the pilot of alternative licensure assessments, these flexibilities will be available for preparation programs through 6/30/24, allowing sufficient time for implementation and evaluation.

Please note: these flexibilities are designed to be supportive of existing approved programs and not for new programs.