

§ 115C-296. Board sets licensure requirements; reports; lateral entry and mentor programs.

(a) **(Applicable to school years before the 2014-2015 school year – see note.)** The State Board of Education shall have entire control of licensing all applicants for teaching positions in all public elementary and high schools of North Carolina; and it shall prescribe the rules and regulations for the renewal and extension of all licenses and shall determine and fix the salary for each grade and type of license which it authorizes.

The State Board of Education may require an applicant for an initial degree certificate or graduate degree certificate to demonstrate the applicant's academic and professional preparation by achieving a prescribed minimum score on a standard examination appropriate and adequate for that purpose. The State Board of Education shall permit an applicant to fulfill any such testing requirement before or during the applicant's second year of teaching provided the applicant took the examination at least once during the first year of teaching. The State Board of Education shall make any required standard initial licensure exam sufficiently rigorous and raise the prescribed minimum score as necessary to ensure that each applicant has adequate academic and professional preparation to teach.

(a) **(Applicable beginning with the 2014-2015 school year – see note.)** The State Board of Education shall have entire control of licensing all applicants for teaching positions in all public schools of North Carolina; and it shall prescribe the rules and regulations for the renewal and extension of all licenses and shall determine and fix the salary for each grade and type of license which it authorizes.

The State Board of Education shall require an applicant for an initial bachelors degree license or graduate degree license to demonstrate the applicant's academic and professional preparation by achieving a prescribed minimum score on a standard examination appropriate and adequate for that purpose. Elementary education (K-6) and special education general curriculum teachers shall also achieve a prescribed minimum score on subtests or standard examinations specific to teaching reading and mathematics. The State Board of Education shall permit an applicant to fulfill any such testing requirement before or during the applicant's second year of teaching provided the applicant took the examination at least once during the first year of teaching. The State Board of Education shall make any required standard initial licensure exam rigorous and raise the prescribed minimum score as necessary to ensure that each applicant has received high-quality academic and professional preparation to teach effectively.

(a1) The State Board shall adopt policies that establish the minimum scores for any required standard examinations and other measures necessary to assess the qualifications of professional personnel as required under subsection (a) of this section. For purposes of this subsection, the State Board shall not be subject to Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. At least 30 days prior to changing any policy adopted under this subsection, the State Board shall provide written notice to all North Carolina schools of education and to all local boards of education. The written notice shall include the proposed revised policy.

(a2) The State Board of Education shall establish a schedule of fees for teacher licensure and administrative changes. The fees established under this subsection shall not exceed the actual cost of providing the service. The schedule may include fees for any of the following services:

- (1) Application for demographic or administrative changes to a license.
- (2) Application for a duplicate license or for copies of documents in the licensure files.
- (3) Application for a renewal, extension, addition, upgrade, reinstatement, and variation to a license.

- (4) Initial application for a New, In-State Approved Program Graduate.
- (5) Initial application for an Out-of-State license.
- (6) All other applications.

An applicant must pay any nonrefundable service fees at the time an application is submitted.

(a3) The State Board of Education shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 15 in any year that the amount of fees in the fee schedule established under subsection (a2) of this section has been modified during the previous 12 months. The report shall include the number of personnel paid from licensure receipts, any change in personnel paid from receipts, other related costs covered by the receipts, and the estimated unexpended receipts as of June 30 of the year reported.

(b) **(Applicable beginning with the 2013-2014 school year until the 2014-2015 school year – see note.)** It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to maintain the highest quality teacher education programs and school administrator programs in order to enhance the competence of professional personnel licensed in North Carolina. To the end that teacher preparation programs are upgraded to reflect a more rigorous course of study, the State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination and cooperation with the University Board of Governors, the Board of Community Colleges and such other public and private agencies as are necessary, shall continue to refine the several licensure requirements, standards for approval of institutions of teacher education, standards for institution based innovative and experimental programs, standards for implementing consortium based teacher education, and standards for improved efficiencies in the administration of the approved programs [, as follows]:

- (1) Licensure standards. –
 - a. The licensure program shall provide for initial licensure after completion of preservice training, continuing licensure after three years of teaching experience, and license renewal every five years thereafter, until the retirement of the teacher. The last license renewal received prior to retirement shall remain in effect for five years after retirement. The licensure program shall also provide for lifetime licensure after 50 years of teaching.
 - b. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and develop enhanced requirements for continuing licensure. The new requirements shall reflect more rigorous standards for continuing licensure and shall be aligned with high-quality professional development programs that reflect State priorities for improving student achievement. Standards for continuing licensure shall include at least eight continuing education credits with at least three credits required in a teacher's academic subject area.
 - c. The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall (i) reevaluate and enhance the requirements for renewal of teacher licenses and (ii) consider modifications in the license renewal achievement and to make it a mechanism for teachers to renew continually their knowledge and professional skills.
- (2) Teacher education programs.
 - a. The State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, and any other

public and private agencies as necessary, shall continue to raise standards for entry into teacher education programs.

- b. Reserved for future codification.
- c. To further ensure that teacher preparation programs remain current and reflect a rigorous course of study that is aligned to State and national standards, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall do all of the following to ensure that students are prepared to teach in elementary schools:
 - 1. Provide students with adequate coursework in the teaching of reading and mathematics.
 - 2. Assess students prior to licensure to determine that they possess the requisite knowledge in scientifically based reading and mathematics instruction that is aligned with the State Board's expectations.
 - 3. Continue to provide students with preparation in applying formative and summative assessments within the school and classroom setting through technology-based assessment systems available in North Carolina schools that measure and predict expected student improvement.
 - 4. Prepare students to integrate the arts across the curriculum.
- d. The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and modify, as necessary, the academic requirements of teacher preparation programs for students preparing to teach science in middle and high schools to ensure that there is adequate preparation in issues related to science laboratory safety.
- e. The standards for approval of institutions of teacher education shall require that teacher education programs for all students include demonstrated competencies in (i) the identification and education of children with disabilities and (ii) positive management of student behavior and effective communication techniques for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior.
- f. The State Board of Education shall incorporate the criteria developed in accordance with G.S. 116-74.21 for assessing proposals under the School Administrator Training Program into its school administrator program approval standards.

(b) **(Applicable beginning with the 2014-2015 school year until the 2017-2018 school year – see note.)** It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to maintain the highest quality teacher education programs and school administrator programs in order to enhance the competence of professional personnel licensed in North Carolina. To the end that teacher preparation programs are upgraded to reflect a more rigorous course of study, the State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination and cooperation with the University Board of Governors, the Board of Community Colleges and such other public and private agencies as are necessary, shall continue to refine the several licensure requirements, standards for approval of institutions of teacher education, standards for institution based innovative and experimental programs, standards for implementing consortium based teacher education, and standards for improved efficiencies in the administration of the approved programs [, as follows]:

- (1) Licensure standards.

- a. The licensure program shall provide for initial licensure after completion of preservice training, continuing licensure after three years of teaching experience, and license renewal every five years thereafter, until the retirement of the teacher. The last license renewal received prior to retirement shall remain in effect for five years after retirement. The licensure program shall also provide for lifetime licensure after 50 years of teaching.
 - b. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and develop enhanced requirements for continuing licensure. The new requirements shall reflect more rigorous standards for continuing licensure and shall be aligned with high-quality professional development programs that reflect State priorities for improving student achievement. Standards for continuing licensure shall include at least eight continuing education credits with at least three credits required in a teacher's academic subject area. Standards for continuing licensure for elementary and middle school teachers shall include at least three continuing education credits related to literacy. Literacy renewal credits shall include evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and intervention strategies for students not demonstrating reading proficiency. Oral language, phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension shall be addressed in literacy-related activities leading to license renewal for elementary school teachers.
 - c. The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall (i) reevaluate and enhance the requirements for renewal of teacher licenses and (ii) consider modifications in the license renewal achievement and to make it a mechanism for teachers to renew continually their knowledge and professional skills.
- (2) Teacher education programs.
- a. The State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, and any other public and private agencies as necessary, shall continue to raise standards for entry into teacher education programs.
 - b. Reserved for future codification.
 - c. To further ensure that teacher preparation programs remain current and reflect a rigorous course of study that is aligned to State and national standards, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall do all of the following to ensure that students are prepared to teach in elementary schools:
 - 1. Provide students with adequate coursework in the teaching of reading and mathematics.
 - 2. Assess students prior to licensure to determine that they possess the requisite knowledge in scientifically based reading and mathematics instruction that is aligned with the State Board's expectations.

3. Continue to provide students with preparation in applying formative and summative assessments within the school and classroom setting through technology-based assessment systems available in North Carolina schools that measure and predict expected student improvement.
 4. Prepare students to integrate the arts education across the curriculum.
- d. The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and modify, as necessary, the academic requirements of teacher preparation programs for students preparing to teach science in middle and high schools to ensure that there is adequate preparation in issues related to science laboratory safety.
 - e. The standards for approval of institutions of teacher education shall require that teacher education programs for all students include the following demonstrated competencies:
 1. All teacher education programs. –
 - I. The identification and education of children with disabilities.
 - II. Positive management of student behavior and effective communication techniques for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior.
 2. Elementary and special education general curriculum teacher education programs. –
 - I. Teaching of reading, including a substantive understanding of reading as a process involving oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
 - II. Evidence-based assessment and diagnosis of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and of reading deficiencies.
 - III. Appropriate application of instructional supports and services and reading interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students.
 - f. The State Board of Education shall incorporate the criteria developed in accordance with G.S. 116-74.21 for assessing proposals under the School Administrator Training Program into its school administrator program approval standards.

(b) **(Applicable beginning with the 2017-2018 school year – see note.)** It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to maintain the highest quality teacher education programs and school administrator programs in order to enhance the competence of professional personnel licensed in North Carolina. To the end that teacher preparation programs are upgraded to reflect a more rigorous course of study, the State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination and cooperation with the University Board of Governors, the Board of Community Colleges and such other public and private agencies as are necessary, shall continue to refine the several licensure requirements, standards for approval of institutions of teacher education, standards for institution based innovative and experimental programs, standards for implementing consortium based teacher education, and standards for improved efficiencies in the administration of the approved programs. [, as follows]:

- (1) Licensure standards.
 - a. The licensure program shall provide for initial licensure after completion of preservice training, continuing licensure after three years of teaching experience, and license renewal every five years thereafter, until the retirement of the teacher. The last license renewal received prior to retirement shall remain in effect for five years after retirement. The licensure program shall also provide for lifetime licensure after 50 years of teaching.
 - b. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and develop enhanced requirements for continuing licensure. The new requirements shall reflect more rigorous standards for continuing licensure and shall be aligned with high-quality professional development programs that reflect State priorities for improving student achievement. Standards for continuing licensure shall include at least eight continuing education credits with at least three credits required in a teacher's academic subject area. Standards for continuing licensure for elementary and middle school teachers shall include at least three continuing education credits related to literacy. Literacy renewal credits shall include evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and intervention strategies for students not demonstrating reading proficiency. Oral language, phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension shall be addressed in literacy-related activities leading to license renewal for elementary school teachers.
 - c. The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall (i) reevaluate and enhance the requirements for renewal of teacher licenses, and (ii) consider modifications in the license renewal achievement and to make it a mechanism for teachers to renew continually their knowledge and professional skills, and (iii) integrate digital teaching and learning into the requirements for licensure renewal.
- (2) Teacher education programs.
 - a. The State Board of Education, as lead agency in coordination with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, and any other public and private agencies as necessary, shall continue to raise standards for entry into teacher education programs.
 - b. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall require that all students preparing to teach demonstrate competencies in using digital and other instructional technologies to provide high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning to all students.
 - c. To further ensure that teacher preparation programs remain current and reflect a rigorous course of study that is aligned to State and national standards, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall do

all of the following to ensure that students are prepared to teach in elementary schools:

1. Provide students with adequate coursework in the teaching of reading and mathematics.
 2. Assess students prior to licensure to determine that they possess the requisite knowledge in scientifically based reading and mathematics instruction that is aligned with the State Board's expectations.
 3. Continue to provide students with preparation in applying formative and summative assessments within the school and classroom setting through technology based assessment systems available in North Carolina schools that measure and predict expected student improvement.
 4. Prepare students to integrate the arts across the curriculum.
- d. The State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall evaluate and modify, as necessary, the academic requirements of teacher preparation programs for students preparing to teach science in middle and high schools to ensure that there is adequate preparation in issues related to science laboratory safety.
- e. The standards for approval of institutions of teacher education shall require that teacher education programs for all students include the following demonstrated competencies:
1. All teacher education programs. –
 - I. The identification and education of children with disabilities.
 - II. Positive management of student behavior and effective communication techniques for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior.
 2. Elementary and special education general curriculum teacher education programs. –
 - I. Teaching of reading, including a substantive understanding of reading as a process involving oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
 - II. Evidence-based assessment and diagnosis of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and of reading deficiencies.
 - III. Appropriate application of instructional supports and services and reading interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students.
- f. The State Board of Education shall incorporate the criteria developed in accordance with G.S. 116-74.21 for assessing proposals under the School Administrator Training Program into its school administrator program approval standards.

(b1) The State Board of Education shall require teacher education programs, master's degree programs in education, and master's degree programs in school administration to submit annual performance reports. The performance reports shall provide the State Board of Education with a focused review of the programs and the current process of accrediting these

programs in order to ensure that the programs produce graduates that are well prepared to teach [, as follows]:

- (1) Report contents. – The performance report for each teacher education program and master's degree program in education and school administration in North Carolina shall follow a common format and include at least the following elements:
 - a. Quality of students entering the schools of education, including the average grade point average and average score on preprofessional skills tests that assess reading, writing, math and other competencies.
 - b. Graduation rates.
 - c. Time-to-graduation rates.
 - d. Average scores of graduates on professional and content area examination for the purpose of licensure.
 - e. Percentage of graduates receiving initial licenses.
 - f. Percentage of graduates hired as teachers.
 - g. Percentage of graduates remaining in teaching for four years.
 - h. Graduate satisfaction based on a common survey.
 - i. Employer satisfaction based on a common survey.
 - j. Effectiveness of teacher education program graduates.
- (2) Submission of annual performance reports. – Performance reports shall be provided annually to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, the State Board of Education, and the boards of trustees of the independent colleges. The State Board of Education shall review the schools of education performance reports and the performance reports for masters degree programs in education and school administration each year the performance reports are submitted.
- (3) Educator preparation program report card. – The State Board shall create a higher education educator preparation program report card reflecting the information collected in the annual performance reports for each North Carolina institution offering teacher education programs and master of education programs. The report cards shall, at a minimum, summarize information reported on all of the performance indicators for the performance reports required by subdivision (1) of this subsection.
- (4) Annual State Board of Education report. – The educator preparation program report cards shall be submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on an annual basis by October 1.
- (5) State Board of Education action based on performance. – The State Board of Education shall reward and sanction approved teacher education programs and master of education programs and revoke approval of those programs based on the performance reports and other criteria established by the State Board of Education.

(b2) An undergraduate student seeking a degree in teacher education must attain passing scores on a preprofessional skills test prior to admission to an approved teacher education program in a North Carolina college or university. The State Board of Education shall permit students to fulfill this requirement by achieving the prescribed minimum scores set by the State Board of Education for the Praxis I tests or by achieving the appropriate required score, as determined by the State Board of Education, on the verbal and mathematics portions of the SAT or ACT. The minimum combined verbal and mathematics score set by the State Board of

Education for the SAT shall be 1,100 or greater. The minimum composite score set by the State Board of Education for the ACT shall be 24 or greater.

(c) It is the policy of the State of North Carolina to encourage lateral entry into the profession of teaching by skilled individuals from the private sector. To this end, before the 1985-86 school year begins, the State Board of Education shall develop criteria and procedures to accomplish the employment of such individuals as classroom teachers. Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, the criteria and procedures shall include preservice training in (i) the identification and education of children with disabilities and (ii) positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint. Skilled individuals who choose to enter the profession of teaching laterally may be granted a lateral entry teaching license for no more than three years and shall be required to obtain licensure before contracting for a fourth year of service with any local administrative unit in this State.

(c1) The State Board of Community Colleges may provide a program of study for lateral entry teachers to complete the coursework necessary to earn a teaching license. To this end, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Board of Community Colleges, shall establish a competency based program of study for lateral entry teachers to be implemented within the Community College System no later than May 1, 2006. This program must meet standards set by the State Board of Education. To ensure that programs of study for lateral entry remain current and reflect a rigorous course of study that is aligned to State and national standards, the State Board of Education shall do all of the following to ensure that lateral entry personnel are prepared to teach:

- (1) Provide adequate coursework in the teaching of reading and mathematics is available for lateral entry teachers seeking certification in elementary education.
- (2) Assess lateral entry teachers are assessed prior to certification to determine that they possess the requisite knowledge in scientifically based reading and mathematics instruction that is aligned with the State Board's expectations.
- (3) Prepare all lateral entry teachers to apply formative and summative assessments within the school and classroom setting through technology-based assessment systems available in North Carolina schools that measure and predict expected student improvement.
- (4) **(Applicable beginning with the 2017-2018 school year – see note.)** Require that lateral entry teachers demonstrate competencies in using digital and other instructional technologies to provide high-quality, integrated digital teaching and learning to all students.

The State Board of Community Colleges and the State Board of Education shall jointly identify the community college courses and the teacher education program courses that are necessary and appropriate for inclusion in the community college program of study for lateral entry teachers. To the extent possible, any courses that must be completed through an approved teacher education program shall be taught on a community college campus or shall be available through distance learning.

In order to participate in the community college program of study for lateral entry teachers, an individual must hold at least a bachelors degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.

An individual who successfully completes this program of study and meets all other requirements of licensure set by the State Board of Education shall be recommended for a North Carolina teaching license.

(c2) It is further the policy of the State of North Carolina to ensure that local boards of education can provide the strongest possible leadership for schools based upon the identified and changing needs of individual schools. To this end, before the 1994-95 school year begins, the State Board of Education shall carefully consider a lateral entry program for school administrators to ensure that local boards of education will have sufficient flexibility to attract able candidates.

(d) The State Board shall adopt rules to establish the reasons and procedures for the suspension and revocation of licenses. The State Board shall revoke the license of a teacher or school administrator if the State Board receives notification from a local board or the Secretary of Health and Human Services that a teacher or school administrator has received a rating on any standard that was identified as an area of concern on the mandatory improvement plan that was below proficient or otherwise represented unsatisfactory or below standard performance under G.S. 115C-333(d) and G.S. 115C-333.1(f). In addition, the State Board may revoke or refuse to renew a teacher's license when:

- (1) The Board identifies the school in which the teacher is employed as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37 or G.S. 143B-146.5; and
- (2) The State Board shall automatically revoke the license of a teacher or school administrator without the right to a hearing upon receiving verification of the identity of the teacher or school administrator together with a certified copy of a criminal record showing that the teacher or school administrator has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to or has been finally convicted of any of the following crimes: Murder in the first or second degree, G.S. 14-17; Conspiracy or solicitation to commit murder, G.S. 14-18.1; Rape or sexual offense as defined in Article 7A of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes. Felonious assault with deadly weapon with intent to kill or inflicting serious injury, G.S. 14-32; Kidnapping, G.S. 14-39; Abduction of children, G.S. 14-41; Crime against nature, G.S. 14-177; Incest, G.S. 14-178 or G.S. 14-179; Employing or permitting minor to assist in offense against public morality and decency, G.S. 14-190.6; Dissemination to minors under the age of 16 years, G.S. 14-190.7; Dissemination to minors under the age of 13 years, G.S. 14-190.8; Displaying material harmful to minors, G.S. 14-190.14; Disseminating harmful material to minors, G.S. 14-190.15; First degree sexual exploitation of a minor, G.S. 14-190.16; Second degree sexual exploitation of a minor, G.S. 14-190.17; Third degree sexual exploitation of a minor, G.S. 14-190.17A; Taking indecent liberties with children, G.S. 14-202.1; Solicitation of child by computer to commit an unlawful sex act, G.S. 14-202.3; Taking indecent liberties with a student, G.S. 14-202.4; Prostitution, G.S. 14-204; Patronizing a prostitute who is a minor or a mentally disabled person, G.S. 14-205.2(c) or (d); Promoting prostitution of a minor or a mentally disabled person, G.S. 14-205.3(b); and child abuse under G.S. 14-318.4. The Board shall mail notice of its intent to act pursuant to this subdivision by certified mail, return receipt requested, directed to the teacher or school administrator at their last known address. The notice shall inform the teacher or school administrator that it will revoke the person's license unless the teacher or school administrator notifies the Board in writing within 10 days after receipt of the notice that the defendant identified in the criminal record is not the same person as the teacher or school administrator. If the teacher or school administrator provides this written notice to the Board, the Board shall not revoke the license unless it can

establish as a fact that the defendant and the teacher or school administrator are the same person.

- (3) In addition, the State Board may revoke or refuse to renew a teacher's license when:
 - a. The Board identifies the school in which the teacher is employed as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37 or G.S. 143B-146.5; and
 - b. The assistance team assigned to that school makes the recommendation to revoke or refuse to renew the teacher's license for one or more reasons established by the State Board in its rules for license suspension or revocation.

The State Board may issue subpoenas for the purpose of obtaining documents or the testimony of witnesses in connection with proceedings to suspend or revoke licenses. In addition, the Board shall have the authority to contract with individuals who are qualified to conduct investigations in order to obtain all information needed to assist the Board in the proper disposition of allegations of misconduct by licensed persons.

(e) The State Board of Education shall develop a mentor program to provide ongoing support for teachers entering the profession. In developing the mentor program, the State Board shall conduct a comprehensive study of the needs of new teachers and how those needs can be met through an orientation and mentor support program. For the purpose of helping local boards to support new teachers, the State Board shall develop and distribute guidelines which address optimum teaching load, extracurricular duties, student assignment, and other working condition considerations. These guidelines shall provide that initially licensed teachers not be assigned extracurricular activities unless they request the assignments in writing and that other noninstructional duties of these teachers be minimized. The State Board shall develop and coordinate a mentor teacher training program. The State Board shall develop criteria for selecting excellent, experienced, and qualified teachers to be participants in the mentor teacher training program.

(e1) The State Board of Education shall allot funds for mentoring services to local school administrative units based on the highest number of employees in the preceding three school years who (i) are paid with State, federal, or local funds and (ii) are either teachers paid on the first or second steps of the teacher salary schedule or instructional support personnel paid on the first step of the instructional support personnel salary schedule.

Local school administrative units shall use these funds to provide mentoring support to eligible employees in accordance with a plan approved by the State Board of Education. The plan shall include information on how all mentors in the local school administrative unit will be adequately trained to provide mentoring support.

(f) The State Board of Education, after consultation with the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina, shall develop a new category of teacher licensure known as the "Masters/Advanced Competencies" license. To receive this license, an applicant shall successfully complete a masters degree program that includes rigorous academic preparation in the subject area which the applicant will teach and in the skills and knowledge expected of a master teacher or the applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the State Board that the candidate has acquired the skills and knowledge expected of a master teacher.

Persons who qualify for a "G" certificate prior to September 1, 2000, shall be awarded a "Masters/Advanced Competencies" certificate without meeting additional requirements. On and after September 1, 2000, no additional "G" certificates shall be awarded. (1955, c. 1372, art. 18, s. 2; 1965, c. 584, s. 20.1; 1973, c. 236; 1975, c. 686, s. 1; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1103, s. 6; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1086, s. 96; 1989, c. 752, s. 66(a); 1993, c. 166, s. 1; c. 199, s. 4; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 716, s. 7; 1997-221, ss. 4(a), (b), 5, 7(a), 8,

9, 14, 17(a), (c); 1997-325, s. 1; 1997-383, s. 1; 1998-5, s. 5; 1998-131, s. 8; 1998-167, s. 1; 1999-96, s. 8; 2000-67, s. 9.2(a); 2001-129, s. 1; 2002-126, s. 7.39; 2003-284, s. 7.20(e); 2003-408, s. 1; 2004-124, s. 7.19(a); 2005-198, ss. 1, 2; 2005-205, s. 3; 2005-419, s. 1; 2007-166, s. 1; 2007-478, s. 1; 2007-484, s. 35; 2008-107, s. 7.8; 2009-59, s. 2; 2009-305, s. 1(b); 2011-348, s. 6; 2012-77, s. 1; 2013-11, s. 1; 2013-226, ss. 3, 5(a)-(c); 2013-360, s. 9.3(a)-(c); 2013-368, s. 22; 2013-410, s. 20(a).)