

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

SENATE BILL 1789

By: Deevers

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to teachers; stating legislative findings; creating the Local Teacher Licensure Act; providing short title; providing purpose; authorizing school district boards of education to evaluate and recommend teacher licensure or certification applications; providing process requirements for the State Board of Education; providing for certain failure to act within certain time period to result in certain approval if certain conditions are met; providing term of certain licenses or certificates; subjecting licenses or certificates to certain renewal; directing the State Board of Education to retain certain oversight; directing the State Department of Education to maintain certain records; directing school district boards of education to establish certain minimum procedures; prohibiting a school district or school district board of education from being liable for certain recommendation; providing for promulgation of rules; providing for noncodification; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

The Legislature finds that:

1 1. Timely teacher licensure is essential to ensuring that
2 public school districts are able to staff classrooms effectively and
3 provide uninterrupted instruction to students;

4 2. Administrative delay in the teacher licensure process can
5 contribute to teacher shortages, particularly in rural and high-need
6 school districts, and undermine local efforts to recruit qualified
7 educators;

8 3. School district boards of education are often best
9 positioned to evaluate the qualifications, character, and readiness
10 of teacher candidates to meet the instructional needs of their
11 communities;

12 4. Excessive centralization of teacher licensure decisions can
13 create unnecessary barriers to employment and delay the placement of
14 otherwise qualified teachers in classrooms in this state; and

15 5. Clear timelines and accountability in the teacher licensure
16 process promote efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness while
17 preserving statutory standards and state-level oversight.

18 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
19 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-117.8 of Title 70, unless
20 there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

21 A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Local
22 Teacher Licensure Act". The purpose of the Local Teacher Licensure
23 Act shall be to grant school district boards of education the
24 authority to evaluate and recommend teacher licensure or
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1 certification applications. The State Board of Education shall
2 maintain final oversight and ratification authority over the
3 issuance of teacher licenses or certificates in compliance with
4 Section 5 of Article XIII of the Oklahoma Constitution and Section
5 3-104 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

6 B. School district boards of education are hereby authorized to
7 evaluate and recommend approval of teacher licensure or
8 certification applications to the State Board of Education based on
9 the standards set forth in Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

10 C. Upon receiving a recommendation for licensure or
11 certification from a school district board of education, the State
12 Board of Education shall:

13 1. Review the recommendation for completeness and compliance
14 with statutory requirements including, but not limited to, Sections
15 5-142, 6-107, 6-122.3, 6-187, and 6-190 of Title 70 of the Oklahoma
16 Statutes. A recommendation shall be considered complete when the
17 Board has received all documentation showing compliance with the
18 statutory provisions in place for teacher licensure or certification
19 when the recommendation was submitted;

20 2. Approve or reject the licensure or certification
21 recommendations within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt; and

22 3. Provide written notification of approval or rejection to the
23 recommending school district board of education and the licensure or
24 certification applicant.

1 D. Failure of the State Board of Education to act on a
2 recommendation within thirty (30) calendar days pursuant to
3 subsection C of this section shall result in the Board's automatic
4 approval of the license or certificate; provided, however, that the
5 recommendation submitted by the school district board of education
6 meets all statutory and procedural requirements for teacher
7 licensure or certification set forth in Title 70 of the Oklahoma
8 Statutes and the rules promulgated by the Board.

9 E. Teacher licenses or certificates issued pursuant to the
10 provisions of this section shall be valid for a term of five (5)
11 years from the date of issuance and shall be subject to renewal in
12 accordance with the provisions of Section 6-108.1 of Title 70 of the
13 Oklahoma Statutes.

14 F. The State Board of Education shall retain oversight of all
15 teacher licensure or certification processes, and the State
16 Department of Education shall maintain all records regarding teacher
17 licenses or certificates issued pursuant to this section.

18 G. School district boards of education shall establish
19 transparent procedures for licensure or certification
20 recommendations including:

21 1. Timelines for application submission, which shall provide
22 teacher license or certificate applicants with a minimum of twenty
23 (20) calendar days to complete the process;

1 2. A timeline for board of education review and approval or
2 rejection, not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days from the date of
3 application submission; and

4 3. Written notification to the teacher license or certificate
5 applicant and the State Department of Education within five (5)
6 business days of the board of education's decision.

7 H. Neither a school district nor its board of education shall
8 be liable for civil damages arising solely from a recommendation
9 submitted pursuant to the provisions of this section.

10 I. The State Board of Education may promulgate rules strictly
11 necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

12 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2026.

13 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
14 of the public peace, health, or safety, an emergency is hereby
15 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
16 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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