

State of Wisconsin



2023 Senate Bill 608

Date of enactment:
Date of publication*:

2023 WISCONSIN ACT

AN ACT to amend 115.28 (7) (a) and 118.19 (3) (a); and to create 118.198 of the statutes; relating to: a license to teach based on working as a paraprofessional in a school district.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 115.28 (7) (a) of the statutes, as affected by 2023 Wisconsin Act 20, is amended to read:

115.28 (7) (a) License all teachers for the public schools of the state; make rules establishing standards of attainment and procedures for the examination and licensing of teachers within the limits prescribed in ss. 118.19 (2) and (3), 118.191, 118.1915, 118.192, 118.193, 118.194, 118.195, ~~and 118.197,~~ and 118.198; prescribe by rule standards, requirements, and procedures for the approval of teacher preparatory programs leading to licensure, including a requirement that, to be approved by the state superintendent, a teacher preparatory program shall demonstrate that it provides instruction that prepares teachers to teach reading and language arts using science-based early reading instruction, as defined in s. 118.015 (1c) (b), and does not provide instruction on teaching reading and language arts that incorporates 3-cueing, as defined in s. 118.015 (1c) (c), and a requirement that, beginning on July 1, 2012, and annually thereafter, each teacher preparatory program located in this state shall submit to the department a list of individuals who have completed the program and who have been recommended by the program for licensure under this subsection, together with each individ-

ual's date of program completion, from each term or semester of the program's most recently completed academic year; file in the state superintendent's office all papers relating to state teachers' licenses; and register each such license.

SECTION 2. 118.19 (3) (a) of the statutes is amended to read:

118.19 (3) (a) No license to teach in any public school may be issued unless the applicant possesses a bachelor's degree including such professional training as the department by rule requires, except as permitted under par. (b) and ss. 115.28 (17) (a), 118.191, 118.1915, 118.192, 118.193, 118.194, ~~and 118.197,~~ and 118.198. Notwithstanding s. 36.11 (16), no teacher preparatory program in this state may be approved by the state superintendent under s. 115.28 (7) (a), unless each student in the program is required to complete student teaching consisting of full days for a full semester following the daily schedule and semester calendar of the cooperating school or the equivalent, as determined by the state superintendent. No license to teach in any public school may be granted to an applicant who completed a professional training program outside this state unless the applicant completed student teaching consisting of full days for a full semester following the daily schedule and semester calendar of the cooperating school or the

* Section 991.11, WISCONSIN STATUTES: Effective date of acts. "Every act and every portion of an act enacted by the legislature over the governor's partial veto which does not expressly prescribe the time when it takes effect shall take effect on the day after its date of publication."

equivalent, as determined by the state superintendent. The state superintendent may grant exceptions to the student teaching requirements under this paragraph when the midyear calendars of the institution offering the teacher preparatory program and the cooperating school differ from each other and would prevent students from attending classes at the institution in accordance with the institution's calendar. The state superintendent shall promulgate rules to implement this subsection. If for the purpose of granting a license to teach or for approving a teacher preparatory program the state superintendent requires that an institution of higher education be accredited, the state superintendent shall accept accreditation by a regional or national institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. department of education or by a programmatic accrediting organization.

SECTION 3. 118.198 of the statutes is created to read:

118.198 License to teach; paraprofessional experience. (1) In this section:

(a) "Employing school district" means a school district that employs an individual as a paraprofessional.

(b) "Experienced teacher" means a teacher who satisfies all of the following criteria:

1. For at least 3 school years, the teacher has been regularly employed in and taught in an employing school district.

2. The teacher holds a Tier II, III, or IV license to teach issued by the department.

3. The teacher has mentored a first-year teacher or a teacher who is newly employed by an employing school district.

(2) Notwithstanding s. 118.19 (4m), (6) to (9), (12), and (14), the department shall grant a nonrenewable Tier I license to teach for a term of 5 years to an individual who is eligible for licensure under s. 118.19 (4) and (10) and who satisfies all of the following:

(a) The individual worked as a paraprofessional in a classroom for at least 3 days a week for at least 3 consecutive school years in the employing school district.

(b) The individual has earned at least 60 credits from an accredited institution of higher education or technical college or has earned an associate degree.

(c) The individual is enrolled in a teacher preparatory program approved by the department that leads to a degree and licensure under s. PI 34.040 (2) (a), Wis. Adm. Code.

(d) All of the following recommend the individual for the license under this section by signing the individual's application for the license:

1. The principal of the school at which the individual worked under par. (a).

2. The school district administrator of the employ-

ing school district or the school district administrator's designee.

(e) The individual submits an application for a license under this section by September 1 of the school year in which the license is to be issued.

(f) The individual has not held a license under this section.

(3) (a) A license to teach issued under sub. (2) authorizes the license holder to teach only in the employing school district that recommended the license holder under sub. (2) (b).

(b) The department may not issue a license to teach issued under sub. (2) in any of the following teaching areas:

1. Early childhood special education.

2. Cross-categorical special education.

3. Speech-language pathology.

4. Deaf or hard of hearing.

5. Blind and visual impairment.

6. American Indian language license.

7. American Indian history, culture, and tribal sovereignty.

(c) During at least the first school year that the license holder is employed as a teacher by the employing school district, the employing school district shall ensure that the license holder is mentored by an experienced teacher. The employing school district shall provide paid release time to the experienced teacher to observe the license holder teaching and provide feedback to the license holder about the experienced teacher's observations.

(d) The employing school district shall ensure that an individual holding a license issued under sub. (2) receives the professional development described in 2023 Wisconsin Act 20, section 27 (2) (a), before the individual teaches a grade from kindergarten to 3 in the employing school district.

(4) Notwithstanding the term of a license under sub. (2), a license under sub. (2) expires on the date that any of the following occur:

(a) The employing school district notifies the department that the individual who holds the license is no longer employed by the employing school district or is no longer enrolled in a teacher preparatory program approved by the department that leads to licensure under s. PI 34.040 (2) (a), Wis. Adm. Code.

(b) The department determines that the individual who holds the license is no longer employed by the employing school district or is no longer enrolled in a teacher preparatory program approved by the department that leads to licensure under s. PI 34.040 (2) (a), Wis. Adm. Code.

SECTION 4. Effective date.

(1) This act takes effect on July 1, 2024.

