



SENATE BILL 279: Amend Qualifications/Practice of Counseling

2015-2016 General
Assembly

Committee:
Introduced by:
Analysis of: S.L. 2015-279

Date:
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Legislative Analyst

SUMMARY: S.L. 2015-279 does the following: (i) changes the requirements applicants must meet when applying for licensure as a licensed professional counselor associate and (ii) requires local boards of education to address sex trafficking prevention and awareness.

Changes to licensure for professional counselor associates

Effective October 1, 2015, the licensing requirements for professional counselor associates are divided into three categories, depending upon when an applicant applies for licensure:

- *Applicants who apply for a license on or before March 1, 2016, must have (i) a master's degree from a regionally accredited school or from one accredited by an organization that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), (ii) a minimum number of hours as determined by when one enters school, and (iii) passed an exam.*
- *Applicants who apply after March 1, 2016, through June 30, 2022, must have (i) a master's degree from a regionally accredited school or from one accredited by an organization both recognized by CHEA and accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), (ii) a minimum number of hours as determined by when one enters school, and (iii) passed an exam.*
- *Applicants who apply on or after July 1, 2022, must have (i) a master's degree from an institution accredited by CACREP, (ii) a minimum number of hours, and (iii) passed an exam.*

Changes to the reproductive health and safety education program

The following changes are made to the reproductive health and safety education program:

- *Effective October 20, 2015, and applicable beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, information conveyed in instruction related to sexual activity and human reproduction must be approved by credentialed experts in the fields of any of the following: sexual health education, adolescent psychology, behavioral counseling, medicine, human anatomy, biology, ethics, or health education.*
- *Effective October 20, 2015, and applicable beginning with the spring semester of the 2015-2016 school year, the reproductive health and safety education program must also include instruction on sex trafficking prevention and awareness. Each local school administrative unit must collaborate with a diverse group of outside consultants where practical, including law enforcement with expertise in sex trafficking, to address the threats of sex trafficking and referral protocol for high-risk pupils. Law enforcement agencies, criminal justice agencies, and non-governmental organizations with expertise in sex trafficking are also permitted to provide materials and information.*
- *Effective January 1, 2016, and applicable beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, information conveyed in instruction related to risks related to sexual activity must be approved by credentialed experts in the fields of any of the following: sexual health*

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education, adolescent psychology, behavioral counseling, medicine, human anatomy, biology, ethics, or health education.

Except as otherwise provided, this act became effective October 20, 2015.