



SENATE BILL 599: Excellent Educators for Every Classroom.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	June 28, 2017
Introduced by:	Sen. Barefoot	Prepared by:	Brian Gwyn
Analysis of:	Fifth Edition		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *The 5th edition of Senate Bill 599 would do the following:*

- *Establish the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards (PEPS) Commission*
- *Authorize entities meeting certain criteria to become approved educator preparation programs (EPPs)*
- *Establish a residency model to replace lateral entry, providing additional support for those teaching as their second career*
- *Create a structured EPP accountability system*
- *Clarify the educator licensure process*
- *Ensure availability of information on teacher vacancies occurring in North Carolina public schools*
- *Add in the contents of House Bill 155 (Modify Educator Licensure Requirements), including:*
 - *Authorize a local board to hire a retired principal or assistant principal as an interim principal, regardless of licensure status*
 - *Add additional ways to qualify for a retirement license through part-time work*
 - *Exempt members of General Assembly from continuing education credits*
- *Add in the contents of House Bill 235 (Teacher Mentor Qualifications), including:*
 - *Allow mentor teachers to be rated as "proficient"*
- *Make other various changes, including:*
 - *Allow clinical educators and clinical mentors to be rated as "proficient"*
 - *Create a pilot program that would allow up to two new eligible EPPs to start in the 2017-2018 year*
 - *Create an exception to the GPA requirement for students with at least 10 years of relevant experience*
 - *Authorize the residency license to be renewed twice*
 - *Eliminate literacy continuing education requirement for middle school teachers*
 - *Require certain teachers who resign following a recommendation for dismissal be deemed to have voluntarily surrendered their license pending an investigation by the State Board*
 - *Authorize a local board to request that the State Board of Education revoke the teacher's license for the remainder of that school year if a teacher resigns without giving at least 30 days' notice*
 - *Authorize a superintendent to provide notice, explanation, and an opportunity to respond to the charges in writing prior to suspending a teacher who is incarcerated or in custody*
 - *Require local boards of education, charter schools, and regional schools to report to the State Board of Education when a teacher's resignation is related to criminal history*
 - *Require the Reading Improvement Commission to study and recommend changes to professional development in the area of literacy*
 - *Make various conforming changes*

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PART I

BILL ANALYSIS: G.S. 115C-269.1 would establish the PEPS Commission, which would be independent of the State Board of Education (State Board) and would recommend standards for educator preparation, licensure, continuing education, and conduct to the State Board.

PART II

EPP APPROVAL PROCESS

CURRENT LAW: Under G.S. 115C-296.8, the State Board may approve any institution of higher education as an EPP, provided that it meets standards required by statute and rule. The statutory standards require that the EPP:

- Either be State-approved or nationally accredited.
- Maintain minimum admission standards, such as satisfactory scores on the Praxis I and a minimum GPA of 2.7 (with an average GPA of at least 3.0 for each cohort).
- Provide instruction in certain areas, such as the identification of children with disabilities, positive behavior management, and digital instruction. Additional instruction is required for particular licensure areas.
- Require students to participate in field experiences each semester, gradually increasing in time and intensity as each semester goes on. Student teaching must take place for a minimum of 16 weeks.
- Require that clinical educators, who supervise student teachers, be licensed, have a minimum of 3 years of experience in a teaching role, and be rated as accomplished on the NC evaluation system.
- Maintain a collaborative partnership with elementary schools and secondary schools and enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with local school administrative units where students are placed, defining joint expectations for a collaborative process.

BILL ANALYSIS: G.S. 115C-269.1 would create explicit definitions for words used throughout Article 20A.

Particularly relevant changes include:

- EPPs: Any entity approved by the State Board rather than only institutions of higher education.
- Approved EPPs: EPPs that have met the requirements of the State Board in lieu of national accreditation.
- Initially Authorized EPP: An EPP that has been approved by the State Board or nationally accredited, but lacks the data to meet all of the accountability standards.
- Authorized EPP: An EPP that has met accountability standards and has been approved by the State Board or nationally accredited.
- Recognized EPP: An EPP that is either initially authorized or authorized, and has the authority to recommend students for educator licensure.
- Clinical intern: Individual who would have been previously called a student teacher.
- Resident: Individual who formerly would have received a lateral entry license.
- Clinical mentors: On-site teachers who would serve as mentors to residents.

G.S. 115C-269.5 would give the State Board the authority to recognize EPPs that meet the standards set out in Article 20A, thus allowing the EPPs to recommend candidates for licensure. Additionally, the statute would lay out the minimum standards EPPs must meet in order to be approved, which mirror those set out by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). G.S. 115C-269.10 would identify the process EPPs must go through in order to recommend students for educator licensure. To be initially authorized or authorized, EPPs must be approved by the State Board or accredited by CAEP, and they must satisfy the performance standards in a way that their status is not revoked under G.S. 115C-269.45.

The minimum admissions requirements outlined in G.S. 115C-269.15 would still include a satisfactory Praxis I score. However, since there would no longer be a separate distinction for lateral entry candidates, having a bachelor's degree could also be used to satisfy this requirement. The 2.7 GPA requirement (with an average of at least 3.0 for each cohort), would remain the same, but individuals with at least 10 years of relevant experience would be exempted from the

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individual GPA requirement. Additionally, individuals applying to a CTE program could be exempted from the individual GPA requirement with at least 5 years of relevant experience.

G.S. 115C-269.15 would leave intact the EPP content requirements in current statute, but would add additional requirements, such as:

- Instruction related to the skills and responsibilities of teachers.
- The expectations for student performance based on State standards.
- The current supply of and demand for educators in the State.
- The State's framework for appraisal of educators.

Middle and high school teacher EPPs must also include adequate coursework in the relevant content area and in the teaching of the relevant content area.

G.S. 115C-269.25 would recodify existing clinical practice requirements with updated terminology. In addition, the statute lists requirements for residencies, which include:

- Residencies must last for a minimum of one year.
- EPPs must provide ongoing support to the resident.
- A clinical mentor must be assigned to the resident.
- Prior to the residency, the resident must complete preservice requirements set by the State Board.

The statute would also require clinical educators to be "proficient" rather than "accomplished". Schools would have to prioritize "distinguished" and "accomplished" teachers unless there is a particular reason for selecting a "proficient" teacher. The clinical mentors would be held to the same standards as clinical educators.

EPP ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-296.13 requires EPPs to submit annual performance reports to the State Board. The statute outlines the minimum data that must be submitted with the report, but provides the State Board with discretion to add additional requirements. The State Board can take action against an EPP if it fails to meet any of the criteria outlined in G.S. 115C-296.8, which includes:

- Failing to report required information to the State Board.
- Offering misleading or false information about approved programs.
- Accepting students into any part of an EPP that is not approved by the State Board.
- Failing to comply with the EPP review process.
- Failing to meet standards for approval set forth by the State Board.

BILL ANALYSIS: G.S. 115C-269.35 modifies permissive accountability language by requiring the State Board to take action against an EPP when the EPP fails to meet standards on the following indicators, broken down by race, sex, and ethnicity:

- Performance of EPP graduates on annual teacher evaluations.
- Proficiency and growth of students taught by EPP graduates.
- Satisfaction of EPP graduates after their first year of teaching.
- Quality of students entering the EPP.

G.S. 115C-269.45 requires the State Board to annually evaluate an EPP's performance and assign an appropriate accountability status, if necessary, based on an EPP meeting one of the following criteria:

- Warned
 - Overall student performance standard is not met on at least one indicator in any one year.
 - Any two race, sex, or ethnicity demographic groups' performance standards are not met on at least one indicator for any one year.
 - Any single race, sex, or ethnicity demographic groups' performance standards are not met on at least one indicator for any two consecutive years.

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- State Board determines a law or rule violation merits warned status.
- Probation
 - Overall student performance standard is not met on at least one indicator in two consecutive years.
 - Any two race, sex, or ethnicity demographic groups' performance standards are not met on at least one indicator for any one year.
 - Any single race, sex, or ethnicity demographic groups' performance standards are not met on at least one indicator for any three consecutive years.
 - State Board determines a law or rule violation merits probation status.
- Revoked
 - EPP has been on probation status for three consecutive years.
 - EPP has been on probation status one year, but State Board determines revoked status is reasonably necessary.

If an EPP is in revoked status, its approval to recommend students for educator licensure is revoked. Other identified sanctions may be implemented at the State Board's discretion, such as:

- Requiring the EPP to obtain technical assistance.
- Requiring the EPP to obtain professional services from another entity.
- Appointing a monitor to oversee and report to the State Board.
- Managing the EPP's enrollment.

Any costs associated with the sanctions would be covered by the EPP.

G.S. 115C-269.35 would also require additional data that must be reported to the State Board and ultimately included in the EPP's report card, such as:

- The extent to which the program prepares educators to effectively teach students with disabilities and students of limited English proficiency.
- The number of EPP graduates who continue teaching at least three years after licensure.

LATERAL ENTRY

CURRENT LAW: Under G.S. 115C-296.12, individuals with a bachelor's degree may start teaching without having completed an EPP. Eligible individuals receive an initial teaching license and may teach for three years while also completing a program of study designed to prepare the lateral entry teachers for continuing licensure. Lateral entry requirements can be completed at North Carolina colleges and universities, as well as local community colleges.

BILL ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 599 would replace the lateral entry license with the residency license. Individuals who already have a bachelor's degree may enroll in an EPP and be employed to teach at the same time. As stated above, G.S. 115C-269.1 outlines the requirements for residencies, which include:

- Residencies must last for a minimum of one year.
- EPPs must provide ongoing support to the resident.
- A site-based clinical mentor must be assigned to the resident.
- Prior to the residency, the resident must complete requirements set by the State Board for field experience and coursework.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

CURRENT LAW: Under G.S. 115C-284(e), school boards may only employ principals who either hold or are qualified to hold a principal's license.

BILL ANALYSIS: S.B. 599 would clarify that retired principals or retired assistant principals may be employed as interim principals, regardless of licensure status.

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BILL ANALYSIS: S.B. 599 recodifies G.S. 115C-296.10(b), which addresses the standards of approval for school administrator preparation programs, as G.S. 115C-284.1, placing it among the other statutes related to school administrator preparation.

PART III

CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-296 requires the State Board to develop a mentor program for new teachers. Mentors must meet criteria established by the State Board, which must at least include being rated as "accomplished" and having met expectations for student growth.

BILL ANALYSIS: G.S. 115C-300.1 would allow teachers rated as "proficient" or higher to be mentors. Additionally, retired teachers would be eligible to be mentors. Priority consideration would still be given to teachers rated as "distinguished" or "accomplished."

BILL ANALYSIS: G.S. 115C-270.1 – 115C-270.35 recodifies existing licensure requirements, as well as making the following changes:

- Defines various teacher licenses:
 - Continuing professional license: 5-year renewable license.
 - Emergency license: One-year nonrenewable license for individual who holds a bachelor's degree with relevant coursework, but who is not eligible for a residency license.
 - Initial professional license: 3-year nonrenewable license for individual who has completed a recognized EPP
 - Lifetime license: License issued after 50 or more years of teaching that requires no renewal
 - Residency license: One-year license (renewable twice) issued to an individual who has:
 - Bachelor's degree with either coursework relevant to the requested licensure area or successful completion of the relevant content area examination.
 - Enrolled in a recognized EPP.
 - Has completed preservice field experience and coursework.
 - Retirement license: 5-year renewable license issued to a teacher who retired with 30 or more years of experience and who has served as a substitute teacher or part-time provider of certain educational services since retirement.
- Removes requirement for middle school teachers to complete continuing education credits related to literacy.
- Exempts members of the General Assembly who are teachers from continuing education credit requirements.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 3.(d) of S.B. 599 would authorize the State Board to continue to issue lateral entry licenses through the 2018-2019 school year.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 3.(e) of S.B. 599 would create a three-year pilot program to allow up to two new EPPs to operate in North Carolina, starting in the 2017-2018 school year. To continue operating beyond the pilot period, the EPPs would have to meet the same criteria as other EPPs under SB 599. Pilot programs would have to meet the following criteria:

- Meet the criteria for approval established in G.S. 115C-269.15, G.S. 115C-269.20, and G.S. 115C-269.25.
- Have a demonstrated track record of success with clearly demonstrated results as an EPP in other states.
- Have CAEP accreditation or be in the process of attaining CAEP accreditation in North Carolina or another state.

BILL ANALYSIS: Section 3.(f) of S.B. 599 would require the Reading Improvement Commission to study and recommend improvements to professional development for teachers in grades 4 – 12 in the area of literacy.

PART IV

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CURRENT LAW: G.S. 115C-325 and G.S. 115C 325.5 require, prior to suspending a teacher without pay, a superintendent to meet with the employee and give the employee written notice of the charges, an explanation of the basis for the charges, and an opportunity to respond.

G.S. 115C-325 and G.S. 115C 325.9 require that a teacher who has been recommended for dismissal and chooses to resign without the written agreement of the superintendent, be reported to the State Board, and be deemed to have voluntarily surrendered his or her license pending an investigation by the State Board. If a teacher who is not recommended for dismissal resigns without giving at least 30 days' notice, the local board may request that the State Board of Education revoke the teacher's license for the remainder of that school year.

BILL ANALYSIS: S.B. 599 would authorize a superintendent, prior to suspending a teacher who is incarcerated or in custody without pay, to provide written notice of the charges, an explanation of the basis for the charges, and an opportunity to respond in writing, rather than meeting with the teacher in person. Additionally, it would require local boards of education to report to the State Board of Education when a teacher's resignation was related to criminal history, regardless of whether dismissal proceedings had begun or the teacher had resigned without permission. The same requirement would apply to charter and regional schools.

PART V

BILL ANALYSIS: S.B. 599 would require a report on teaching positions that local boards of education are unable to fill by the 40th instructional day. Additionally, it would recodify reporting requirements related to the state of the teaching profession.

PART VI

BILL ANALYSIS: Part VI of S.B. 599 would make various conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The act would be effective when it becomes law and would apply beginning with the 2017-2018 school year. The act would be phased in such that:

- EPPs approved by the State Board prior to July 1, 2017 would be considered initially authorized until the earlier of June 30, 2020, or the date of its five-year renewal. EPPs not approved as of that date would first be eligible to open during 2018-2019 school year.
- Reporting requirements would begin with the 2018-2019 school year.
- No EPP may be assigned a "revoked" accountability status prior to the 2023-2024 school year.