

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY - 2026 SESSION

CHAPTER 891

An Act to direct the Department of Education to convene a stakeholder work group for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of and making recommendations on the alternative licensure pathways for public school teachers in the Commonwealth.

[S 450]

Approved April 13, 2026

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. *As used in this act, "alternative licensure pathway" includes a pathway to attaining a provisional license, as that term is defined in § 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia, through (i) a local eligibility licensure pursuant to subsection N of § 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia; (ii) the career-switcher program; (iii) the Teach for America license pursuant to § 22.1-299.4 of the Code of Virginia; (iv) any other alternate route to licensure used to meet the requirements for a provisional license pursuant to subsection P of § 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia and 8VAC20-23-90 of the Virginia Administrative Code; (v) the iTeach Virginia Alternate Route to Licensure Program; (vi) any nontraditional education preparation program offered by a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, a school division, or a certified provider for alternate routes to licensure; and (vii) teaching as a long-term substitute teacher acting as a teacher of record.*

§ 2. *The Department of Education (the Department) shall convene a stakeholder work group for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive review of and making recommendations on the alternative licensure pathways for public school teachers in the Commonwealth. The work group shall consist of (i) representatives from major education associations, including the Virginia Education Association, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, the Virginia School Boards Association, and the Virginia Parent Teacher Association; (ii) faculty members from public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth with education preparation programs, selected in consultation with the deans of education in such schools to represent expertise in teacher education, educational leadership, special education, and English language learner instruction; (iii) representatives from career-switcher programs offered at comprehensive community colleges and school division-led licensure programs; (iv) public school teachers who have completed or are currently participating in an alternative licensure pathway, including long-term substitute teachers and teachers who have completed or are currently participating in career-switcher programs; (v) representatives from the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure; (vi) representatives of staff responsible for the Virginia Longitudinal Data System; (vii) at least one representative from an advocacy organization for English language learners; and (viii) the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health or their designees, as nonvoting, ex officio members. In conducting the comprehensive review, the work group shall:*

1. Meet at least quarterly and solicit input from public school teachers, administrators, teacher candidates, and community members;

2. Collect and evaluate data on the number of teachers employed in public schools in the Commonwealth as a whole and disaggregated by school division who:

a. Are participating in or have participated in an alternative licensure pathway;

b. Hold a provisional license, as that term is defined in § 22.1-298.1 of the Code of Virginia, and (i) the change over time in teachers employed in public schools who hold a provisional license; (ii) the number of such teachers, as a whole and as a percentage of all such teachers in the applicable school division, who obtain a renewable license; and (iii) the average time required for such teachers to complete licensure; and

c. Are participating in or who have participated in the iTeach Virginia Alternate Route to Licensure Program or an education preparation program, as that term is defined in § 22.1-298.2 of the Code of Virginia, offered by a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, a school division, or a certified provider for alternate routes to licensure, and (i) the number of such teachers, as a whole and as a percentage of all such teachers in the applicable school division, who obtain a renewable license and (ii) the average time required for such teachers to complete licensure;

3. Examine the mentoring, induction, and professional development supports provided to teachers in each alternative licensure pathway and identify how such supports differ from those provided to graduates of traditional education preparation programs;

4. Collect and examine data on teacher retention rates for teachers who participated in each alternative licensure pathway as compared to retention rates for teachers who completed traditional education preparation programs, disaggregated by school division and, where such data is available, by teacher demographic characteristics and grade level being taught;

5. Collect and examine data on student achievement and growth outcomes, including outcomes of students

with disabilities and English language learners, for classes taught by teachers participating in an alternative licensure pathway as compared to those for classes taught by fully licensed teachers, controlling for prior student achievement and student demographic characteristics, to the extent possible;

6. Analyze the distribution of public school teachers across the Commonwealth that do not hold a renewable license and that hold only a provisional license to identify any disparities and trends in school divisions with the highest and lowest proportion of provisionally licensed teachers, including (i) whether economically disadvantaged students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners are more likely to be taught by provisionally licensed teachers and (ii) differences in funding levels received by school divisions with the highest proportions of provisionally licensed teachers and school divisions with the lowest proportions of provisionally licensed teachers;

7. For education preparation programs offered by public institutions of higher education, the career-switcher program, and the iTeach Virginia Alternate Route to Licensure Program, compare (i) curriculum, coursework, practicum, and mentoring requirements of each program; (ii) the cost to participants and the availability of financial aid; and (iii) how well each program prepares participants for classroom teaching, based on available data and stakeholder feedback;

8. Collect data on long-term substitute teachers employed in the same classroom for more than 90 days in public schools in the Commonwealth, including (i) the number, roles, and qualifications of such long-term substitute teachers; (ii) the training and supports they receive; (iii) the number of such long-term substitute teachers who are pursuing licensure; and (iv) the impact of long-term substitute teachers on student outcomes; and

9. Make recommendations on (i) the essential criteria for effective alternative education preparation programs and alternative licensure pathways, including the coursework, supervised clinical experiences or mentorship structures, and evaluation processes most associated with classroom readiness, licensure completion, and teacher retention; (ii) standards for partnerships between school divisions, public institutions of higher education, and certified providers of alternative routes to licensure designed to ensure quality and alignment with student learning needs of alternative licensure pathways; and (iii) any policy changes, legislative proposals, or funding necessary to improve the quality, efficacy, and outcomes of teachers who participate in alternative licensure pathways.

The Department shall submit to the Governor and the Chairs of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health and post in a public location on its website by (a) October 1, 2026, an interim report summarizing the activities of the work group to date that includes a description of preliminary findings, data collected, gaps in data identified, and any initial recommendations and (b) by October 1, 2027, a final report on the findings and recommendations of the work group, including any data collected and analyses of such data and the recommendations made pursuant to subdivision 9.