

## Technical Assistance Response

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**Date:** June 26, 2013  
**To:** Ira Pollack  
**From:** Kathleen Paliokas, Director, Education Workforce  
Council of Chief State School Officers, Partner on Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

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Thank you for your request for information on promising practices for a tiered licensure system and strategies for aligning the tiered system with a pay structure. In an effort to collect the most relevant and recent resources, we consulted our Educators in Residence who work directly with states, referenced an unpublished report on teacher certification done for the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 2012 (see note at the end of this response), and reviewed state websites. This represents our best knowledge in a context of fast-moving state reforms.

As you noted in your request, New Mexico is a state that has been on the cutting edge on this issue. We recognize that you are aware of the work they are doing; however, if you need another contact in New Mexico's system, Peter Winograd, Director of the Center for Education Policy Research at the University of New Mexico, is an excellent resource. He can be reached at 505- 340-5664 or via e-mail ([pkwinograd@yahoo.com](mailto:pkwinograd@yahoo.com)). If you would like us to facilitate an introduction, we would be more than happy to do so. Just let us know.

In addition to New Mexico, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) [Clearinghouse](#) (subscription service) states that roughly 10 states use a single certificate, approximately 21 use a two-tier system consisting of an initial and a professional license, and approximately 17 states use three or more tiers.

Multi-tiered licensure structures can incentivize educators to develop and improve their performance as they work toward advanced status. When working in tandem with policies related to compensation, career ladders, and ongoing professional learning, licensure can be a lever to promote educator development, advancement, and retention. Licensure also serves as an accountability mechanism in that it sets the parameters for determining which teachers or principals advance in the system. All these efforts should be considered together so that an integrated and coherent system is developed.

### State Examples

When determining initial educator licensure or licensure renewal, most states are still input focused and require the completion of a set of activities such as induction, professional development hours, advanced degrees, or a professional development plan. The federal Race to the Top initiative laid the groundwork for incorporating outcome- or performance-based

requirements for licensure by placing emphasis on student growth as a key indicator of effective teacher performance. Many states are establishing policies that integrate both inputs and outcomes to determine licensure. Rhode Island and Maryland are two states that require educators to complete an induction program (input) for professional licensure while also requiring the recommendation of a supervisor or a series of evaluations that are informed, at least in part, by student growth (outcome). Similarly, three states (Rhode Island, Maryland, and Ohio) are moving toward implementing a licensure renewal process that requires teachers to align their professional development plans to their evaluation process in which up to 50 percent of the evaluation is derived from student achievement scores.

Several states have implemented strategies in an effort to incorporate performance-based measures into license renewal:

- New Mexico requires its teachers to submit a “professional-development dossier” that demonstrates to their principals, mentoring teachers, and two independent reviewers that they have the teaching skills identified by the state.
- Wisconsin requires that teachers submit a portfolio and videos of their teaching. These items are reviewed by a three-member team prior to advancing. Additional information on this process can be found in the resource [Tiered Teacher Certification and Performance-Based Assessment](#).
- North Carolina requires beginning teachers to complete an induction program and receive a rating of “proficient” on all five North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards on their most recent evaluation before advancing. More information on this process can be found in [Tiered Teacher Certification and Performance-Based Assessment](#).
- Under Maryland’s proposed three-tier performance-based certification system funded through Race to the Top, teachers not rated “effective” or higher on their evaluation, of which 50 percent includes student achievement and growth, will not receive a professional certification or continue to teach in Maryland. New York, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Georgia have planned similar changes, and Louisiana has already adopted them.

## Ohio

In addition to New Mexico, Ohio is another state with a well-developed and well-aligned tiered licensure system. In 2009, Ohio restructured its teacher licensure system to establish a career ladder system for educators. The four-tiered system provides opportunities for teachers to advance in their professional careers and take on new roles and responsibilities without having to leave the teaching profession. The four tiers of licensure are called resident educator, professional educator, senior professional educator, and lead professional educator. For additional information on these tiers, you can view [Ohio’s licensure website](#).

Another useful resource is Ohio’s educator standards. The standards serve as the framework for a teacher’s developmental continuum and are aligned to the tiered system. You can read more on these standards [here](#).

As part of its Race to the Top initiative, Ohio also has proposed to align educator effectiveness and licensure by requiring demonstration of student growth as one of multiple criteria for

issuance and renewal of licenses. Under the state’s proposed system, a teacher must attain a performance rating of “effective” by the end of their residency period to receive a professional educator license. One of the measures incorporated into the “effective” rating requires students to grow by one grade level in an academic year. The senior professional license requires teachers to attain a “highly effective” performance rating, and the lead professional license requires a “distinguished” performance rating—both of which require students to grow more than one grade level in an academic year. Although these changes have been proposed in Ohio, they have not been implemented there yet.

For more information, you can contact Julia Simmerer, Director, Office of Educator Effectiveness, Center for the Teaching Profession at 614-752-8996 or [julia.simmerer@ode.state.oh.us](mailto:julia.simmerer@ode.state.oh.us). View [Ohio’s Race to the Top application](#) (see section D2).

## Rhode Island

Rhode Island is one of the first states to move decisively to redesign its licensure system to align with educator effectiveness. The state has transformed its educator certification process from a single certificate to three tiers, and it awards and renews certification based solely on evidence of effectiveness as assessed through the local evaluation system. Renewal of all educator certifications issued after January 1, 2012, has been based exclusively on evaluation ratings. The new system requires completion of a structured induction program that integrates mentoring, professional learning, and supervision so that new teachers can document effective practice before attaining a professional license. For renewal, educators must provide evidence of at least one evaluation rating of “developing” or higher during the length of their certification to demonstrate effective practice. See [Rhode Island’s requirements](#). See [additional information](#).

## Promising Strategies

States interested in redesigning their teacher licensure systems should keep the following promising strategies in mind:

- **Build a Continuum of Expectations.** Licensure should support and promote state goals of educator development and improved student learning. This means the licensure system should embed a continuum of performance-based expectations and licensing assessments that begin with the novice and carry into advanced practice.
- **Create Opportunities.** Supports that provide educators with opportunities to learn and that scaffold their development should be built into the licensure system. These supports might include comprehensive induction systems and mentoring.
- **Leverage Relationships.** The relationships between preparation providers and the districts in which their candidates are placed (for clinical practice, residencies, or employment) should be leveraged so that there is follow-through into the early induction years and so that a culture of collegial coaching carries over from preparation into early practice.
- **Utilize Evaluation Data.** Another key strategy is to explore how to leverage evaluation data in valid and reliable ways to inform high-stakes licensure decisions as one of multiple measures. These data also should be linked to ongoing professional growth plans that can serve as another source of performance data as well.

## Additional Resources for Consideration

[InTASC Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0](#) (2013). Developed by CCSSO and aligned to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Model Core Teaching Standards, this is a useful tool to help states in crafting a tiered system of licensure, supports, assessments, and advancement opportunities for teachers. The progressions can help states see how teaching practice develops over time and what more sophisticated practice looks like at different developmental levels.

[SCEE Webinar on Tiered Licensure and Developmental Continuums](#) (August 9, 2011). This State Consortium on Educator Effectiveness (SCEE) resource is an informal dialogue among three state representatives on the key issues and challenges in building tiered licensure systems.

[Toward the Effective Teaching of New College- and Career-Ready Standards: Making Professional Learning Systemic](#) (May 2012). The brief includes discussions about how state-level professional development, teacher certification, teacher evaluation, and teacher compensation policies can come together to build systems that support true professional learning with respect to implementing new college- and career-readiness standards.

[Creating a Comprehensive System for Evaluating and Supporting Effective Teaching](#) (2012). This resource by Linda Darling-Hammond outlines the need for coherence across an educator effectiveness system, including alignment of standards, licensure, performance assessments, evaluation, and professional learning.

Unfortunately, there has not been significant state action on the alignment of tiered licensure and compensation systems. New Mexico is the only state we are aware of that has been doing work in this area. However, as more information becomes available, we will report back to you.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Paliokas

Director, Education Workforce

CCSSO, Partner to the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders

**Note:** David Steiner's unpublished 2012 report for CCSSO titled *Teacher Certification across the United States: Disparities, Innovations, and Trends* was used as a resource in this summary.