

MELISSA TOOLEY AND TAYLOR WHITE

RETHINKING RELICENSURE

Promoting Professional Learning Through
Teacher Licensure Renewal Policies

AUGUST 2018

About the Authors



Melissa Tooley is the director of PreK–12 Educator Quality with the Education Policy program at New America where she focuses on policies and practices that impact teaching quality and school leadership.

She researches and writes primarily on educator preparation, professional development, and retention, including rethinking human capital structures, but has also worked on “whole child” educational approaches and policies. Tooley and her work have been featured in the Atlantic, Education Week, U.S. News & World Report, and the Wall Street Journal, among other publications. Before joining New America, Tooley was a policy analyst at The Education Trust. While completing her master’s in public policy at the University of Chicago, Tooley interned with Chicago Public Schools’ Office of Academic Enhancement and the White House Domestic Policy Council. Prior, she worked in higher education policy at The Institute for College Access & Success, in health policy at the Epilepsy Foundation of New York City, and in market research consulting at Nielsen BASES. Tooley holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Drew University.



Taylor White is a senior policy analyst with the Education Policy program at New America, where she focuses on developing effective college and career pathways. White works closely with colleagues from the Center on Education & Skills at New America

[CESNA] on topics related to youth apprenticeship. She has worked on both K–12 and higher education policy issues in previous roles at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and on behalf of the Australian Department of Education & Training in her role as the deputy director of education policy & research at the Australian Embassy in Washington, DC. She has taught high school and college students in the United States and in Oslo, Norway, where she was a Fulbright Scholar in 2010. White holds a master’s degree in education policy and management from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a bachelor’s degree in English from Bowdoin College.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the many state education agency leaders who took time to respond to emails, to engage in phone interviews, and to review our work to ensure we accurately portrayed their teacher relicensure policies and practices. Stephanie Aragon, Jennie Brotman, Ann Nutter Coffman, Lynette Guastaferrro, Jennifer Cohen Kabaker, and Matt Verber provided valuable background information and context. We appreciate the feedback of those who reviewed drafts of the paper, including David Hendrie of the Chief Council of State School Officers, Stephanie Hirsh of Learning Forward, Sarah Pinsky and Ellen Sherratt of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Elizabeth Ross and Catherine Worth of the National Council on Teacher Quality, and Phillip Rogers of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. We are grateful to New America colleagues Elena Silva, Roxanne Garza, and Sabrina Detlef for providing expert and editorial insight, and to Kristyn Lue, Joshua Ddamulira, and Itziri Gonzalez-Barcenas for research support. Thank you also to Riker Pasterkiewicz and Maria Elkin, who directed publication. Finally, this work would not have been possible without generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The views expressed herein represent those of the authors and not necessarily the individuals or organizations named above.

About New America

New America is committed to renewing American politics, prosperity, and purpose in the Digital Age. We generate big ideas, bridge the gap between technology and policy, and curate broad public conversation. We combine the best of a policy research institute, technology laboratory, public forum, media platform, and a venture capital fund for ideas. We are a distinctive community of thinkers, writers, researchers, technologists, and community activists who believe deeply in the possibility of American renewal.

Find out more at newamerica.org/our-story.

About the Education Policy Program

New America’s Education Policy program uses original research and policy analysis to help solve the nation’s critical education problems, serving as a trusted source of objective analysis and innovative ideas for policymakers, educators, and the public at large. We combine a steadfast concern for low-income and historically disadvantaged people with a belief that better information about education can vastly improve both the policies that govern educational institutions and the quality of learning itself. Our work encompasses the full range of educational opportunities, from early learning to primary and secondary education, college, and the workforce.

Our work is made possible through generous grants from the Alliance for Early Success; the Foundation for Child Development; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund; the Heising Simons Foundation; the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; the Joyce Foundation; the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; the Kresge Foundation; Lumina Foundation; the McKnight Foundation; the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; the Smith Richardson Foundation; the W. Clement and the Jessie V. Stone

Foundation. Find out more at newamerica.org/education-policy.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Research Approach | 3 |
| Teacher Licensure's Purpose: Intentions and Realities | 4 |
| Understanding State Teacher Licensure Policies | 5 |
| Standard Teacher Licensure Renewal: An Overview of State Policies | 7 |
| Could National Board Certification Be a Model for Licensure Renewal? | 9 |
| Unpacking the "Continuing Education" Requirement | 11 |
| Illinois: Tackling the Challenge of Quality Control in Teacher PD | 15 |
| Goals for Growth: A Better Way to Structure Professional Learning? | 16 |
| Setting and Enforcing Clear Standards | 17 |
| Georgia: A Purposeful Approach to Incorporating Professional Growth in Recertification | 18 |
| Tracking Progress Toward PGPs | 21 |
| Experimenting with Better Measures of Teacher Learning | 22 |
| Challenges to Moving to a Professional-Growth Focused Recertification System | 23 |
| Conclusions and Recommendations | 25 |
| Conclusions | 25 |
| Recommendations | 27 |
| Micro-credentials: State Considerations for Licensure Renewal | 29 |
| APPENDIX A: Additional Research Approach Details | 32 |
| APPENDIX B: Kentucky Continuing Education Option (CEO) Plan Scoring Rubric | 33 |
| APPENDIX C: Kentucky CEO Portfolio Assessment Form (Abridged) | 36 |

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, Georgia’s Professional Standards Board, the body charged with overseeing teacher licensure statewide, introduced sweeping changes to the requirements educators must meet to retain and renew their licenses to teach. Seven years earlier, the Georgia House of Representatives had taken the unusual step to suspend all continuing education requirements pending a review of “the state of Professional Learning in Georgia and its relationship to certificate renewal.”¹ The new licensure renewal process—developed over many years, with input from multiple stakeholders—is intended to usher in a more intentional, personalized culture of professional learning statewide. To this end, the new system requires teachers to develop and make progress toward individualized goals for professional learning that are based on growth needs identified in their previous performance evaluations.

Georgia’s new model was designed to address a reality that is now common in many states across the United States: professional development (PD) tied to the recertification process had become expensive and disjointed. Teachers were frustrated by a system that had come to feel like a costly compliance exercise, rather than a purposeful, productive investment in their growth. And although state agencies, local school systems, regional educational service agencies, and colleges and universities all played a role in

delivering professional development as part of licensure renewal, they operated without a clear or coordinated sense of purpose.²

Like Georgia, most states require teachers to renew their licenses periodically. Ostensibly, the recertification process provides a way for states to ensure that teachers continually update their professional knowledge and skills and remain fit to serve in the nation’s public schools. In practice, however, state policy is rarely designed to reliably deliver on this outcome.

Typically, states require teachers to accumulate a set number of credit hours or units of professional development before they can be eligible to renew an expiring teaching license. Despite widespread evidence that many of the activities teachers use to fulfill those requirements are not likely to drive improvements in practice, most states neglect to provide guardrails to steer teachers toward more worthwhile, relevant learning opportunities.³ Even in states where more rigorous evaluation systems make it possible to identify teachers’ individual needs for improvement, states rarely require teachers to take those needs into account when selecting professional learning activities to fulfill renewal requirements. And, because few states vet the quality of PD providers or their products, teachers who attempt to find high-quality PD opportunities relevant to their needs have few tools to aid their decision-making process.⁴

Further compounding the issue is the fact that states rarely require teachers to demonstrate they have benefited in any way from the professional learning activities they have completed. In most states, as long as teachers accumulate the requisite number of credits and meet other minimum requirements (e.g., pass a background check, submit a processing fee, etc.), they are eligible to renew their licenses and continue working in the state's schools.

This apparent disregard for quality and outcomes signals to teachers that recertification—and, more specifically, the PD it requires—is little more than a compliance exercise, and results in teachers choosing PD largely based on convenience and price.⁵ To providers, on the other hand, this disregard for quality and outcomes signals opportunity, leading to a ballooning market that faces little pressure to invest resources in evaluating or incorporating evidence-based practices into PD offerings.

Given this climate, it is no surprise that PD has gained a poor reputation among educators and among those who study education. In 2016, New

America issued a report, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies*⁶, that provided a high-level view of the role state policies have played in perpetuating the conditions that have led to this skepticism. While that report analyzed how states' teacher recertification processes contribute to the issues with PD, it did not investigate which states are trying to take a more productive approach to teacher licensure renewal—and which are not.⁷

To fill that gap, this paper examines states' requirements and processes for licensure renewal, exploring how particular elements impede or encourage the creation of more effective professional development pathways. Drawing on *No Panacea*, we highlight where state renewal policies conflict with what is known about best practices in PD and adult learning. Most importantly, where promising policies and innovative practices exist, including Georgia, we evaluate their potential to foster more effective, personalized, outcomes-focused approaches to professional learning.

RESEARCH APPROACH

New America reviewed publicly available documents pertaining to current teacher recertification policies across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and engaged in conversation with state teacher certification agency personnel (full methodology details are available in Appendix A). For the purposes of the project, we chose to focus only on policies pertaining to states' processes for *standard* license renewal. We have generally

excluded from our analysis policies related to licensure advancement (i.e., the process by which a teacher advances an initial license to a standard license, or a standard license to an advanced license); additionally, we have not evaluated policies related to emergency or temporary license, or the processes through which teachers can transfer licenses between states.⁸

Though the terminology states use to refer to teaching license types varies, this report will use the following terms and definitions:

Initial License: The license fully-credentialed entry-level teachers receive prior to being issued a standard or professional license. Initial licenses are generally valid for one to three years and allow the licensee to serve as the lead classroom teacher, although may require the licensee to receive mentorship or other formal supervision from a more experienced educator. Initial licenses are different from temporary or emergency licenses, or those that allow student teachers without full credentials to teach independently for short periods.

Standard License: A multi-year license that teachers are eligible to receive after completing any required provisional or initial licensure period.

Advanced License: A multi-year license that teachers can earn by completing a series of requirements above and beyond those associated with the standard license. Advanced licenses, sometimes called master licenses, frequently confer additional distinction, benefits (e.g., pay) and/or responsibilities (e.g., mentoring, instructional leadership roles) on license holders.

More details on attainment of these various license types, their purpose, and how they differ by state, follow in the next section.

TEACHER LICENSURE'S PURPOSE: INTENTIONS AND REALITIES

In its 1935 report on the “National Survey on the Education of Teachers,” the U.S. Office of Education declared that “certification to teach is not a right; it is a privilege to be granted only in terms of proved capacity—capacity in scholarship, knowledge, abilities, interests, health, personal and social qualities, character and ideals deemed essential to education in democracy.” Unfortunately, the office concluded, “at present scientific evidence does not exist to substantiate the criteria of selection

implied in the foregoing items.”⁹ More than 80 years later, states—the entities currently responsible for selecting certification criteria for teachers in their jurisdiction—continue to wrestle with defining the qualities and capacities necessary to teach and how to assess them. As a result, the types of teacher licenses states offer, vary widely (see **Understanding State Teacher Licensure Policies** on the following page for summary data from our national scan), as do the requirements to earn them.

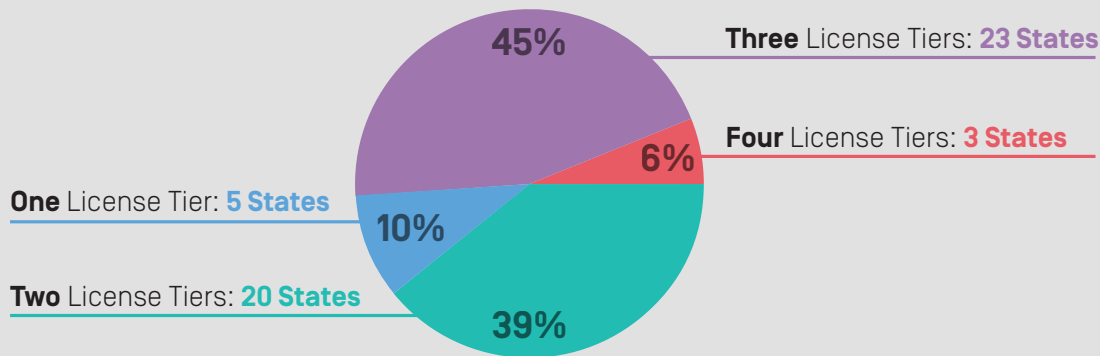
Understanding State Teacher Licensure Policies

While this report is primarily focused on policy related to standard teaching licenses, the requirements governing initial, advanced, and temporary licenses play an important role in the overall teaching ecosystem.

Number and Types of Licenses

Most states [46], including the District of Columbia, maintain teacher licensing systems with at least two tiers of licensure (see Figure 1).^{*} Among these states, most [42] offer an initial license, and about half [22] offer an advanced license, in addition to the “standard” license.

Figure 1 | State Teacher Licensure Policy: Number of Tiers



***Note:** Many states also issue emergency or temporary licenses to allow individuals who do not meet the traditional requirements for a full license (like the initial or standard license) but are deemed qualified for a specific teaching assignment or are needed due to some extenuating circumstance. These license types are not included here.

Validity Period for Various License Types

In most states, a standard license is valid for five years (see Figure 2). Typically this license type can be renewed indefinitely throughout a teacher’s career.

Figure 2 | State Teacher Licensure Policy: Standard License Validity Period

| Number of Years “Standard” License is Valid | Number of States |
|---|------------------|
| 3 years | 2 |
| 4 years | 1 |
| 5 years | 39 |
| 6 years | 1 |
| 9 years | 1 |
| 10 years | 1 |
| 12 years | 1 |
| 99+ years/Lifetime | 5** |

****Note:** In four of these states, teachers do not need to “renew” their license but still must complete some requirements every one-to-five years in order to maintain their license.

Initial licenses tend to be valid for shorter periods of time [between one and four years] and typically either cannot be renewed or can be renewed only once. Advanced licenses are typically valid for the same time period as the state’s standard license, or longer.

In most states, teachers begin their careers with an **initial license**. The implicit purpose of this license type is straightforward and logical: it is important that teachers demonstrate they are qualified to lead classroom learning before doing so. However, the education field has hotly debated¹⁰ whether most states' current requirements for initial licensure—a bachelor's degree and passage of basic skills and/or subject-specific exams (e.g., the Praxis tests)—meet this objective.¹¹

As a result, some states have begun experimenting with more competency-based approaches to developing and assessing initial ability to teach. For example, 11 states now require prospective teachers to pass the edTPA, a performance assessment developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity.¹² Designed “to emphasize, measure, and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom,” the edTPA evaluates teaching candidates based on portfolios of lesson plans, assessments, student work, and video of themselves in action during their student teaching placement.¹³

If a teacher with an initial license plans to continue teaching, he or she must eventually advance to a **standard license**. As is the case in many other professions, initial attainment of the standard license is meant to represent a guarantee of fitness for service and a minimum standard of professional ability. To secure a standard license, teachers must typically complete a designated amount of in-service teaching experience and/or professional development requirements.¹⁴ However, with the availability of data from more robust educator evaluation systems, an increasing number of states now require teachers holding initial licenses to demonstrate evidence of classroom effectiveness before they can advance to standard licenses and officially join the teaching profession. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality, not a single state imposed such a requirement in 2009; as of 2017, at least eight states required proof of classroom effectiveness—as evidenced by their summative rating via a school-based performance

evaluation system—before granting a teacher a standard teaching license.¹⁵

Other states are taking a performance assessment approach—similar to the edTPA for initial licensure—using third-party evaluators to determine if a teacher is ready to advance from an initial to a standard license. Ohio, for example, has since 2011 required early-career teachers to complete the Resident Educator (RE) Program, a multi-year mentoring and support program for new teachers that culminates in a performance-based assessment called the Resident Educator Summative Assessment (RESA). The RE Program (including passing the RESA) is a mandatory stepping-stone for new teachers to advance from the state's initial license to its standard teaching license.¹⁶

Our review of state licensure policies finds that most states (29) do not offer an **advanced license** beyond the standard license, and its attainment is nearly always optional.¹⁷ But 50 states, including the District of Columbia,¹⁸ do require teachers to renew their standard licenses at regular intervals—typically every five years—throughout their careers.¹⁹ Four of these states technically issue “lifetime” or equivalent standard licenses, but even they require teachers to take similar steps to maintain their license (e.g., submission of forms and/or continuing education) even if the process is called something other than “renewal.”²⁰ Just one state—New Jersey—issues lifetime teaching licenses that carry no requirements for maintenance.

But what is the rationale for requiring teachers to periodically renew their standard licenses? Ostensibly the recertification process serves to reaffirm that teachers meet a minimum standard of professional competence and fitness. However, in most states, licensure renewal requires teachers to engage in and document professional development opportunities, such as continuing education, indicating that states also intend for the recertification process to serve an *additional purpose*: to encourage and verify ongoing professional learning and growth.

This secondary purpose is often murky: while most states have articulated the intended purpose of licensure and that of educator professional development, they have not explicitly articulated a clear rationale for how these two systems are meant to intersect in the renewal process to promote professional growth.

Of the 50 states that require teachers to renew their licenses periodically (recall that New Jersey issues life licenses with no maintenance requirements), only 13 offer explicit justification for doing so. North Carolina, for example, offers that “the renewal process ensures that professional educators licensed as school personnel continually update their professional knowledge and technical

competency.”²¹ Likewise, according to Florida statute, teacher licensure renewal “promotes the continuing professional improvement of school personnel, thereby enhancing public education in all areas of the state.”²²

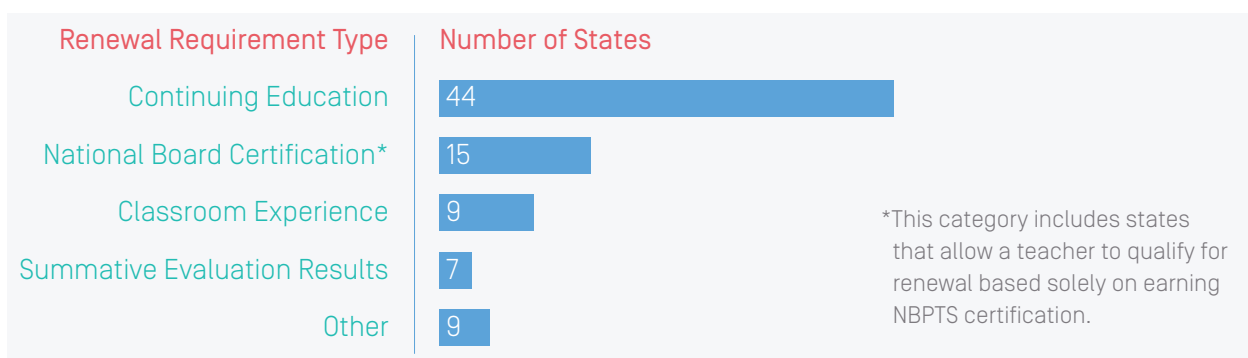
But with or without a stated rationale, states’ recertification systems have done little to ensure that teachers consistently engage in high-quality professional learning that promotes “continuing professional improvement.” Most states’ systems *do* require teachers to complete professional development activities—but they are rarely designed to ensure those activities lead to meaningful growth for teachers or their students, even if they purport to do so.

STANDARD TEACHER LICENSURE RENEWAL: AN OVERVIEW OF STATE POLICIES

To understand where teacher recertification systems have fallen short and how they can be improved, it is necessary to understand that among the 50 states that require teachers to periodically renew their standard licenses, there is significant variation in

exactly *what* the recertification process demands. In general, states’ policies impose one or more of the following requirements on teachers seeking to renew their standard licenses:

Figure 3 | Standard Teaching License: Breakdown of Recertification Requirements



Continuing Education: Forty-four states require teachers to complete continuing education, generally measured using credit or clock hours, continuing education units, and/or professional development points. The amount of required continuing education varies considerably from state to state, as do the types of activities that can “count” as continuing education.

National Board Certification: Fifteen states allow teachers to renew their licenses by presenting evidence that they earned certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) during their current licensure period.²³ This category includes only those states that allow a teacher to qualify for renewal *based solely on earning NBPTS certification*, although some states recognize NBPTS certification for renewal in other ways (see the National Board certification category in **Unpacking the “Continuing Education” Requirement** on page 11).²⁴

Classroom Experience: Eight states require teachers to document minimum classroom teaching experience to renew their licenses. For example, North Dakota requires candidates for recertification to demonstrate “thirty teaching days of contracted service” while holding their expiring license (in addition to continuing education).

Summative Evaluation Results: Six states take into account teachers’ summative evaluation ratings when considering their eligibility for licensure renewal. In three of these—Louisiana, New Mexico, and Rhode Island—all teachers renew their licenses based solely on overall performance (although to earn a sufficient performance rating, teachers must demonstrate efforts to grow professionally, based on their respective state’s evaluation rubric). In Rhode Island, for example, teachers must demonstrate “at least one evaluation rating of ‘Developing’ or higher during the length of their certification to demonstrate effective practice and attain certification renewal.”²⁵ In DC, Ohio, and Tennessee, only teachers who have consistently demonstrated excellence by earning high performance ratings are exempted from state requirements for continuing education.

Other: Seven states have other requirements that are highly specific and do not fall into the categories above. For example, two states require teachers to get a recommendation from their district superintendent in addition to other more standard requirements, like continuing education. States classified as “Other” may also offer an alternative route to renewal. In West Virginia, for example, teachers over the age of 60 can renew their licenses based solely on their age; they are not subject to any of the professional development requirements that their younger peers must meet.²⁶

Many states provide multiple pathways to licensure renewal, allowing teachers to qualify by completing the requisite number of continuing education credits *or* by earning NBPTS certification *or* by earning the highest possible rating on a performance evaluation, for example.²⁷ These different pathways provide flexibility but they are not all created equal: teachers who qualify for renewal by amassing scattershot continuing education credits have in all likelihood not experienced the same amount of professional growth as peers who qualify by earning National Board Certification (see **Could National Board Certification Be a Model for Licensure Renewal?** on page 8).

In some states, it is clear that relicensure is not the vehicle through which the state intends to promote teachers’ professional learning, but rather to confirm a level of adequate moral fitness or commitment to teaching. California, for example, only requires teachers seeking to renew a standard license to submit a professional fitness application, in addition to the license processing fee and background check that most states require.²⁸ In Nebraska, teachers can renew solely by completing a form verifying they have taught for at least one full school year during the current licensure period.²⁹ Neither of these states has additional requirements for continuing education or performance (both states abolished their continuing education requirements within the last decade).

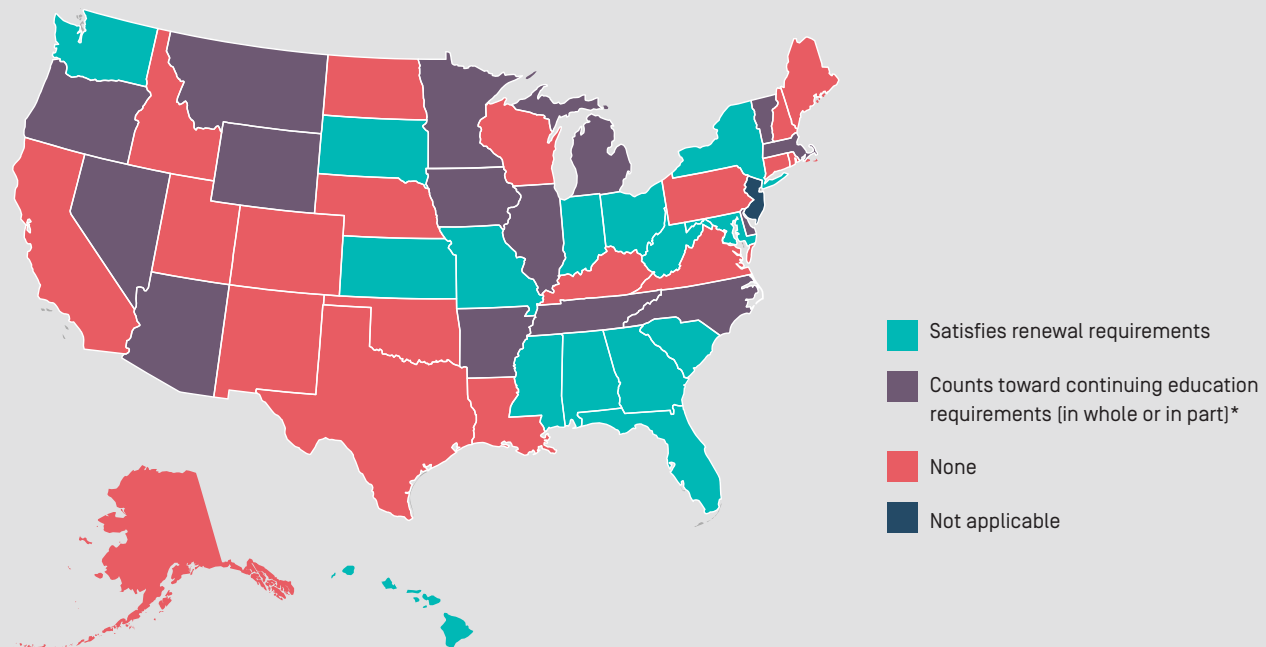
Likewise, systems like DC's, which only requires continuing education requirements for teachers not rated at least "effective" by their local education agency, attempt to reward adequately-performing teachers by exempting them from the investments of time and money that continuing education requires.

While rewarding high-performers is a worthy goal, this decision may inadvertently discourage teachers from pursuing more challenging professional growth and leadership opportunities that research shows are necessary to keep them engaged in the profession.³⁰

Could National Board Certification Be a Model for Licensure Renewal?

Although most states do not show signs of moving quickly toward more meaningful assessments of teachers' professional learning as part of recertification, New America's review does find that 28 states recognize the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification process as a route to licensure renewal, in some fashion. [See **Figure 4** below and accompanying **Data Supplement**.]

Figure 4 | National Board Certification in State Relicensure Policies



***Note:** In some instances, MD and WA only allow NBPTS certification to "count toward continuing education requirements." Tallies in this report reflect that these two states hold both types of policies.

Based on a comprehensive set of standards established in the late 1980s by the NBPTS, initial National Board Certification is a rigorous process that requires teachers to pass a computer-based content-specific assessment of pedagogical practices and knowledge and submit extensive evidence (videos, lesson plans, student work, reflections, etc.) of their positive effect on student learning to an external assessorⁱ—a much higher bar than other teacher licensure requirements in nearly every state.ⁱⁱ Certification from NBPTS is widely recognized as the most prestigious professional certification available to American educators, with less than 4 percent of the nation's more than 3 million classroom teachers having earned the distinction.ⁱⁱⁱ

Evaluations of NBPTS certification have been mostly positive, with separate studies of teachers in Washington, North Carolina, California, and Florida all concluding that National Board Certified teachers (NBCTs) are generally more effective than their non-NBCT peers.^{iv} However, other studies have raised questions about whether NBCTs are more effective than their peers as a result of having completed the NBPTS certification process, or because the process attracts teachers who are already more motivated, more effective, and/or better positioned to be effective throughout and after certification (based on the demographics of their students and schools). Researchers' findings on this issue of causation have been mixed.^v

Nonetheless, states continue to recognize National Board certification as a valued distinction, as evidenced by the support they provide in state policy. According to the NBPTS, 18 states provide loans or subsidies to help teachers pursuing National Board certification cover expenses associated with the process, which costs just under \$2,000 from start to finish.^{vi} Twenty-five states provide additional compensation to teachers who successfully complete the certification process, with several states providing annual stipends around \$10,000 to NBCTs teaching in high-need schools.^{vii}

If the goal of the teacher licensure renewal system is to promote personalized professional learning and growth for teachers, then the National Board Certification process holds much potential as a tool to incorporate. However, the feasibility of scaling this model for all teachers within a state is low. Even if NBPTS developed sufficient capacity to identify and train enough reviewers to maintain its high standards, in many states, the working conditions, compensation, and status of teaching would also have to improve to attract and retain enough teachers willing and able to succeed in the process. That said, because challenging professional growth opportunities are shown to keep teachers engaged in the profession, incorporating NBPTS as part of the relicensure process could help further develop and retain the states' most motivated teachers.^{viii}

ⁱNational Board for Professional Teaching Standards, "Get Started," accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.nbpts.org/national-board-certification/get-started/>.

ⁱⁱWhile true for initial NBPTS certification, this may not hold for NBPTS renewal. Although it still requires the submission of reflections and evidence, the NBPTS renewal process can generally be completed in under 40 hours, a much shorter period than initial certification, which can take up to five years to complete. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' Ellen Sherratt (vice president for Policy and Research) and Sarah Pinsky (senior manager, Policy), personal communication with authors, September 28, 2017; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, "Renewal Overview," Renewal and Maintenance of Certification, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.nbpts.org/national-board-certification/renewal/>.

ⁱⁱⁱEstimate based on published figures from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the National Center for Education Statistics.

^{iv}Dan Goldhaber and Emily Anthony, *Can Teacher Quality Be Effectively Assessed? National Board Certification as a Signal of Effective Teaching* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2005).

^vIbid.; James Cowan and Dan Goldhaber, "National Board Certification and Teacher Effectiveness: Evidence from Washington State," *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* 9, no. 3 (2016): 233–258; Charles T. Clotfelter, Helen F. Ladd, and Jacob L. Vigdor, "Teacher-Student Matching and the Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness," *The Journal of Human Resources* 41, no. 4 (2006): 778–820.

^{vi}National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, "Guide to National Board Certification, Version 2.4" accessed March 14, 2018, http://www.nbpts.org/wp-content/uploads/2.0_Guide_to_NBC_v1.0.pdf.

^{vii}The definition of "high-needs" varies by state. The maximum stipend available to National Board Certified teachers is in Washington state: \$10,090; Arkansas, Hawaii, and Mississippi all offer maximum bonuses of \$10,000.

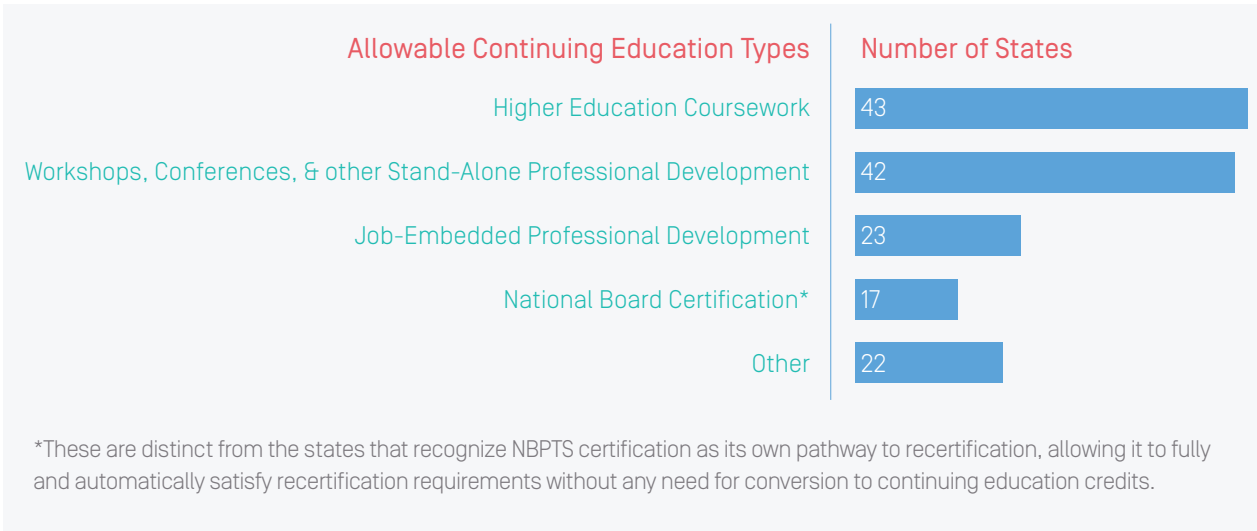
^{viii}Katie Loehrke, "3 ways to motivate high performers," *The Business Journals*, July 27, 2016, <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/human-resources/2016/07/3-ways-to-motivate-high-performers.htm>

UNPACKING THE “CONTINUING EDUCATION” REQUIREMENT

Across states, the most common pathway for teachers to achieve recertification is through continuing education. The education field is not alone in requiring continuing education to maintain licensure; this is standard practice in both medicine and law. And at face value, continuing education seems like a reasonable and worthwhile requirement. But to understand how well-meaning

policy has subverted the culture of ongoing professional growth it is meant to encourage, it is necessary to look closely at how states have designed and implemented their requirements for continuing education. Figure 5 highlights the distribution of different types of continuing education requirements across states:

Figure 5 | Standard Teaching License: Breakdown of Continuing Education Requirements



Higher Education Coursework: Of the 44 states (including DC) that require continuing education as part of the recertification process, nearly all (43) include higher education coursework (e.g., graduate-level credits). Forty-one states allow continuing education credits to be earned through formal coursework at institutions of higher education, while two states—Nebraska and North Dakota—mandate that teachers’ credits be earned this way and provide no other options for fulfilling renewal requirements.

Workshops, Conferences, and other Stand-Alone Professional Development: Forty-two states allow teachers to earn continuing education credits through state- or district-sanctioned professional development activities, which often include seminars, workshops, online modules, and other structured learning experiences. These are generally short-term activities rather than sustained, ongoing learning experiences.

Job-Embedded Professional Development: Twenty-three states also award continuing education units for job-embedded professional development. Though states define this term differently, it is used here to describe professional learning experiences that occur as part of teachers’ day-to-day responsibilities (but does not include formal, school-run PD sessions). Allowable activities typically include participating in a Professional Learning Community, mentoring program (either as the mentor or mentee), or instructional coaching (as coach or recipient); contributing to curriculum development, serving as a department or grade-level lead, or taking on similar school- or district-based responsibilities. States vary in their methods for quantifying these activities, but most either assign a fixed value (in terms of hours or units) or ask teachers to track the amount of time they have devoted to a particular task or assignment.

National Board Certification: Seventeen states award continuing education credit to teachers who complete NBPTS certification during the license renewal period.³¹ In Massachusetts, for example, where teachers must earn 150 “professional development points” (PDPs) to qualify for renewal, earning NBPTS certification can earn them 120 PDPs. In other states, including Montana, Minnesota and Nevada, NBPTS certification can be converted to a credit or point total that satisfies the states’ full continuing education requirement. (Note: This report makes a distinction between these 17 states that require teachers to “convert” NBPTS certification to a credit or point value, and the 15 states that recognize NBPTS certification as its own pathway to recertification, allowing it to fully and automatically satisfy recertification requirements without any need for conversion.) Renewal of NBPTS may also count toward continuing education credits or units (CEUs): in North Carolina, for example, initial NBPTS certification satisfies the full eight-credit requirement for state recertification, but teachers receive only two credits toward state licensure renewal when they renew their NBPTS certification.

Other: Twenty-two states award continuing education credit for “other” activities that do not fall into any of the above categories, including service in the military or as an elected state official, leadership in professional organizations or school reform activities, completion of micro-credentials, education-related travel, or the publication of educational research. As with job-embedded activities, states vary in how they award credits or units for these “other” activities, but most default to time-based measures or equivalences.

Ten states limit their definition of continuing education (for re-certification purposes) exclusively to higher education courses and state- or district-sanctioned professional development activities like workshops and seminars—activities commonly considered to be “traditional” PD. The remainder allow teachers to fulfill their continuing education requirement by combining activities from several categories, as teachers have busy schedules, and many live far from colleges and universities, making it difficult for them to enroll in formal in-person coursework. In addition to allowing flexibility in what types of activities count as “continuing education,” states also provide flexibility in the content of these activities, allowing teachers to accumulate a patchwork of credits on their way to recertification.

Some flexibility is necessary to prevent PD from becoming a one-size-fits all proposition; teachers’ assignments, specialties, and individual needs for growth necessitate different options for professional learning. But many states have chosen not to impose guidelines that would ensure this flexibility yields a coherent, purposeful, and relevant learning experience for teachers. In designing broad policies to meet everyone’s needs, states have created a system that serves no one well. Most state policies dictate that “allowable” PD be related to a teacher’s areas of certification or be “appropriate to the content and grade level of the certificate and endorsement,”³² but they typically do not explain how determinations of relevance should be made—either by the teacher, or by the entity approving the activities to issue the renewal. For example, Delaware’s policy requires that “one half of the required [90] hours shall be in activities that relate to the educator’s work with students or staff,”³³ which implies that the other 45 hours need not be directly relevant or connected to teachers’ day-to-day work.

Some states provide a list of approved topics for continuing education, but those lists tend to only broaden the possibilities, rather than narrow them. Florida’s list of “appropriate topics for license renewal,” for example, includes common options like “methods or education strategies specific to the subject area(s)” and “content specific to the

subject areas,” but also recommends coursework in “computer literacy, computer applications, or computer education” and “drug abuse, child abuse and neglect, and/or student dropout prevention,” among other broad and varied topics.³⁴

This pattern holds even in states that have begun allowing teachers to earn continuing education credits through “micro-credentials” that require teachers to submit evidence, such as videos, lesson plans, student work, and other artifacts, demonstrating a discrete teaching skill through an online platform.³⁵ Micro-credentials’ targeted, competency-based approach has the potential to home in on teachers’ specific growth needs in a way that most graduate-level courses do not, but most states employing them as part of relicensure are not yet leveraging that potential. For example, while Tennessee is thoughtfully piloting one micro-credential pathway that is tightly aligned to its state-developed teacher observation rubric, participating teachers are currently given complete choice in selecting which micro-credential(s) to pursue, even if those credentials focus on skills they have already mastered.³⁶ Tennessee Department of Education officials believe they might require teachers to select micro-credentials more targeted to their individual needs in the future, once teachers and their districts’ professional learning coordinators become more comfortable with the micro-credentialing process. If states do not move in this direction, they miss an opportunity to use information available from multiple-measure teacher evaluation systems to ensure that professional development activities are aligned with teachers’ demonstrated needs for growth.³⁷ (For more details on the promises and pitfalls of micro-credentials in the recertification process, see **Micro-credentials: Considerations for Licensure Renewal** on page 28.)

Certainly, continuing education activities across a broad range of topics and formats might be entirely worthwhile for a teacher’s development, but broadly, research shows that most continuing education activities do not align with what high-quality research or adult learning theory indicates is most useful: active learning opportunities that are explicitly relevant to teachers’ professional

responsibilities and/or areas of developmental need, built upon over a significant amount of time, and which allow for interaction and input from other educators.³⁸ Making matters worse, few useful tools exist to help teachers evaluate the quality of PD offerings available to them, or to help them understand which PD options might be particularly useful for their goals and needs.³⁹

These issues exist at least in part because state policies promote a “time served” approach that relies on a simple count of how many hours teachers have devoted to PD activities or how many CEUs they have accumulated, rather than using more direct measures of learning to assess how and how much teachers have grown. Even the 23 states that award credits for job-embedded learning activities, such as participation in professional learning communities, still often just ask teachers to estimate how many hours they devote to these activities, and then convert those hours into credits using “exchange rates” dictated arbitrarily by policy. Whether a teacher grows considerably while fulfilling her state’s renewal requirements or does not improve at all is of no consequence under most renewal systems. As long as teachers earn the requisite number of CEUs through approved activities and meet any other requirements imposed by the state, they will qualify for renewal without having to demonstrate what new skills or knowledge they have acquired, or how they plan to apply it to advance student learning.

Whether a teacher grows considerably while fulfilling her state’s renewal requirements or does not improve at all is of no consequence under most renewal systems

This focus on inputs instead of outputs also makes it nearly impossible to assess which PD options or providers are high-quality and relevant enough to student and teacher needs to drive improvement in teaching and learning. Even in states that have upped their standards for providers, there is virtually no effort to assess the quality or relevance of the professional learning activities that they deliver (see **Illinois: Tackling The Challenge of Quality Control in Teacher PD** on page 15).

Among the states that impose recertification requirements involving continuing education, the specifics of the policies—how frequently teachers must renew, how many hours or units are needed to renew, and what “counts” toward that total—vary significantly (see **Data Supplement** for more details). But at their core, most have one key feature in common: they prescribe teachers a dosage of professional development activity without regard for what symptoms they are trying to address, and without any mechanism to follow up with teachers to determine if the treatment had any effect.

Illinois: Tackling the Challenge of Quality Control in Teacher PD

States' licensure renewal policies have created a huge and sustained demand for professional development (PD) activities that teachers can use to fulfill recertification requirements. Providers—including universities, teachers' unions, school districts, publishers, and independent consultants—have emerged to meet this demand, creating a vast and fragmented market of courses, seminars, retreats, and other activities to help the nation's 3.5 million teachers maintain their certification.ⁱ

Typically, providers must seek state approval to offer PD that provides teachers credit toward renewal. Many states have adopted standards that providers (and their offerings) need to meet to be eligible for approval, but the enforcement of these standards is often lax, and ongoing monitoring of the quality of providers' offerings is virtually nonexistent. Indeed, some states require providers to do little more than sign a form verifying that their offerings meet the standards.ⁱⁱ

Illinois is a noteworthy outlier. Until 2013, the state had more than 8,000 approved providers. But today, due to new state professional learning standards, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) only recognizes about 105 independent providers, in addition to the colleges, universities, museums, and school districts, that have statutory authority to provide PD.ⁱⁱⁱ Under a new bill passed in 2017, providers are now subject to random annual audit by the ISBE, and will need to provide data demonstrating how their offerings impacted "[A] educator and student growth in regards to content knowledge or skills, or both; [B] educator and student social and emotional growth; or, [C] alignment to district or school improvement plans."^{iv}

Though it is too new to evaluate its impact on the state's PD landscape, Illinois' new policy is important for two reasons: first, it signals to provider and teachers that the quality of professional learning matters; and second, it puts pressure on providers to evaluate and their offerings and demonstrate efficacy—a requirement providers rarely face elsewhere in the PD marketplace.

ⁱFor more on the dynamics of the PD provider marketplace, see the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), *Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development* (Seattle: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015).

ⁱⁱMelissa Tooley and Kaylan Connally, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016).

ⁱⁱⁱIllinois adopted Learning Forward's model "Standards for Professional Learning" in 2013. See Public Act 098-0610 (Chicago: Illinois General Assembly, 2013)" for the state law and <https://learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning> for the standards.

^{iv}*Public Act 100-0013* (Chicago: Illinois General Assembly, 2017).

- 1. Identify individual goals for professional growth.**
- 2. Map out a plan of continuing education activities designed to help achieve growth goals.**
- 3. Complete continuing education activities and submit evidence that the plan was completed.**

0-20%

21-40%

41-60%

EDUCATION POLICY

While similar in key ways to NBPTS' certification process, the PGP process is typically not as standardized or rigorous. Still, PGPs have the potential to introduce greater focus and coherence to the professional development teachers complete on their way toward recertification.

In particular, the goal setting process can structure and personalize teachers' PD "program" and reduce the likelihood that their time is wasted in PD that is unrelated to any clear individual objectives for growth, or disconnected from the improvement goals that have been set by their school and district.

Connecting teachers' individual goals to specific professional development experiences to address them is also a significant improvement over many traditional renewal systems, which all but encourage teachers to take a scattershot approach to their own professional learning. Indeed, research points to a need for professional development that is sustained, relevant to teachers' daily work, connected to their content areas, and involves active, collective learning opportunities.⁴⁰ Systems that require teachers' PGPs to include goal-specific activities that align with these principles may be especially well-suited to promote professional growth.

PGPs offer another key benefit: by requiring teachers to document their progress and collect evidence of their growth, PGPs seek to assess how much teachers have grown as a result of their

professional learning activities, rather than relying on indirect measures (such as credit hours or continuing education units) that quantify the time teachers have devoted to professional learning but do little to evaluate if that time was well spent.

In evaluating policy in states that have incorporated PGPs into the licensure renewal process, however, we found that in some cases, states have adopted PGP models in name only, without installing the policy infrastructure needed to ensure PGPs can live up to their potential. Specifically, we find that many states have not set or enforced clear standards to guide the goal-setting process, or to ensure a rigorous assessment of teachers' progress toward those goals. Additionally, we find that several states still rely on time-based credits as their primary measure for fulfilling their PGPs. Nonetheless, by incorporating the concept of PGPs into the recertification process, states affirm that professional learning should be more personalized and more meaningful for teachers, and there is much to be learned from the systems they have created in pursuit of that goal.

PGPs have the potential to introduce greater focus and coherence to the professional development teachers complete on their way toward recertification

Setting and Enforcing Clear Standards

Goal setting plays a foundational role in the PGP model, and 10 of the 12 states that allow or require PGPs as part of the recertification process explicitly require teachers to take their own needs for improvement into account when setting professional growth goals. Many of these 10 states mandate or recommend that teachers' goals address skills or knowledge areas that have been flagged for improvement in their previous performance evaluations.

Eight of the 12 states go further and require teachers to also consider student, school, and/or district needs for improvement. In Georgia, for example, policy requires that teachers' Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) "be aligned with individual educator evaluation results as well as with school and school system professional learning plans."^{41 42} [See **Georgia: A Purposeful Approach to Incorporating Professional Growth in Recertification** on page 18 for insights into the recent development of its model.]

Georgia: A Purposeful Approach to Incorporating Professional Growth in Recertification

In 2010, the Georgia House of Representatives established the Study Committee on Professional Learning to examine “the state of Professional Learning in Georgia and its relationship to certificate renewal,” and to ultimately make recommendations that would lead to “improved student learning.”ⁱ Comprised of state legislators, teachers, and officials from both the Department of Education and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC)—the body charged with regulating the certification of Georgia’s teachers and school administrators—the committee’s final report included 11 recommendations, the first of which called on the GaPSC to “establish certification renewal rules requiring the demonstration of the impact of professional learning on educator performance and/or student achievement.”ⁱⁱ

In July 2017, after several years of stakeholder input and research led by the GaPSC, Georgia’s ambitious new educator licensure renewal requirement —GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36—took effect. Describing the paradigm shift represented by the new model (and, specifically, the rule mandating it), the GaPSC explained that “our focus is now not one of emphasizing seat time, but one of emphasizing the intentional learning occurring within professional learning. This new Rule will have a fundamental impact and change in [sic] the way we think about professional learning, implement professional learning, monitor professional learning, and evaluate professional learning. The future face of professional learning in Georgia is job-embedded, collaborative, and focused on improved teaching and increased student learning.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Though it is far too early to determine the rule’s impact, or to predict whether it will create the fundamental shift envisioned by the GaPSC, the rule incorporates the core principles of a coherent, high-quality professional learning system. Under the new model, a majority of teachers in Georgia are now required to coordinate with a supervisor to develop broad Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) and then engage in professional learning appropriate for successful completion of these goals.^{iv} Teachers who receive an annual performance rating of Needs Development, Ineffective, or Unsatisfactory in the state’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (for annual performance evaluation) must develop a more comprehensive Professional Learning Plan (PLP), in lieu of PLGs.

To promote a focus on teachers’ individual development needs, the rule specifies that PLGs “must be directly associated” with teachers’ previous annual evaluations and encourages their linkage to teachers’ field of certification, school or district improvement plans, and state or federal requirements—a clear effort to promote coherence between individual needs and local and broader goals for improvement. For example, one teacher of English learners in Forsyth County Schools developed the following goal: “During the school year, I will learn effective strategies for instruction to help ESOL students comprehend mainstream, grade level content while promoting the development of English language proficiency. I will implement learning from the [English as a Second Language (ESOL)] Endorsement Class, investigate effective, research-based strategies, and collaborate with current ESOL [sic] teacher in my school. Measures of success will include student growth data, student observations, self-reflection, and completion of ESOL Endorsement class in Fall 2018.”^v Georgia’s model also now requires that professional learning be “primarily job-embedded and done in the context of the school learning community,” in keeping with research-based practices in adult professional learning.^{vi}

Though college coursework is still an acceptable form of professional learning, it must be pre-approved by teachers’ supervisors and complement (rather than replace) the job-embedded experiences outlined in a teacher’s PLGs or PLP. Notably, there is no requirement for how many credit hours a teacher can or must accumulate through this coursework; that decision is left to the discretion of the teacher and supervisor, based on the teacher’s goals and needs.^{vii} Instead, supervisors are required to “determine whether or not [an] educator has made sufficient progress on implementation of the PLGs or PLP,” and are encouraged to periodically check in with teachers to review their progress and make adjustments to their plans as needed.^{viii}

Georgia’s model also now requires that professional learning be “primarily job-embedded and done in the context of the school learning community”

Although Georgia spent substantial time and effort thoughtfully reenvisioning its renewal policies, implementing their theory of action may prove more challenging. Absent from the requirements is a clear definition of what constitutes “sufficient progress,” or guidance on how progress should be measured as part of PLGs or PLPs. These decisions are left to the individual districts and supervisors implementing the new system. And while the GaPSC and the state department of education have been offering training and resources to school and district leaders on elements of successful professional learning systems, it is unclear whether any supporting resources are providing these types of guidelines for implementing PLGs/PLPs. Without such resources, there is the possibility for inconsistent quality of PLGs/PLPs and for decisions about teachers’ progress (and, by extension, their eligibility for renewal) to be made subjectively. This, in turn, could undermine the system’s ability to enforce high-quality professional learning on a consistent basis.

A further concern about maintaining a high bar for quality stems from the fact that Georgia’s new professional learning system links teachers’ progress on PLGs and PLPs to their annual performance evaluation. Any teacher who is determined not to have made “sufficient progress” on his goals could, in theory, receive a lower summative performance rating.^{ix} And, since the new licensure rule allows the GaPSC to refuse renewal to any teacher who earns two ratings of Unsatisfactory, Ineffective, or Needs Development during a five-year license period, supervisors’ decisions about what constitutes “sufficient progress” on PLGs could have implications for teachers’ ability to continue practicing. Based on evidence from high-stakes teacher evaluation systems elsewhere, without oversight, this scenario could drive supervisors to apply lower-than-intended quality standards out of fear that they will be responsible for ending a colleague’s career.^x

Thus far, Georgia Department of Education and GaPSC officials have not received many questions or concerns about the new system. It is too soon to tell whether this is because the supports provided have been sufficient, and the new system is off to a successful start, or—with no required timeline for implementation, and a five-year license renewal cycle—that teachers and leaders are not yet feeling any urgency about instituting the new requirements. But Bobbi Ford, education specialist at the GaPSC, is patiently optimistic that the new system will deliver on its promise to drive student outcomes by fundamentally shifting the culture of professional learning. “Sure, everyone’s resistant to change. They think, ‘What do you mean I have to jump through this one more hoop?’” she shared. “But we believe every teacher will end up feeling that push for continuous improvement—that we all have to get better for our students.” If Georgia can find the capacity to provide sufficient resources and supports for districts and school leaders, including samples of high-quality PLGs and assessment rubrics, its new renewal system has the underpinnings to prove her right.

ⁱGaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 *Renewal Requirements* (Atlanta: Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2017), 3.

ⁱⁱHouse Study Committee on Professional Learning, *Final Recommendations* (Atlanta: Georgia House of Representatives, 2010), 2.

ⁱⁱⁱGaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 *Renewal Requirements* (Atlanta: Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2017), 7.

^{iv}Teachers holding National Board Certification are exempt from this requirement.

^vMeghann Farmer (innovative learning coordinator of Forsyth County Schools), email to authors, May 2, 2018.

^{vi}GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 *Renewal Requirements* (Atlanta: Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2017), 9.

^{vii} Teachers who no longer work in schools, agencies, or other education organizations can, however, satisfy the new requirements for renewal by earning any combination of six semester hours of college coursework, 10 Georgia Professional Learning Units, or 10 Continuing Education Units, or 100 clock hours of “Bright from the Start” approved training.

^{viii}GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 *Renewal Requirements* (Atlanta: Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2017).

^{ix}In Georgia’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) for performance evaluation “Professional Learning” is worth 20 percent of a teacher’s annual score. LEAs must determine the criteria for rating this component. The Georgia Department of Education strongly recommends LEAs align their requirements with GaPSC recertification requirements, but they are not required to do so.

^xMatthew A. Kraft and Allison F. Gilmour, “Revisiting The Widget Effect: Teacher Evaluation Reforms and the Distribution of Teacher Effectiveness,” *Educational Researcher* 46, no. 5 (2017): 234–249.

By imposing greater coherence between teachers' individual goals for growth and those that have been set at the school or district level, states can help teachers focus their energy on connected, reinforcing goals, rather than on competing objectives for growth. This coherence is not only more efficient, it may also be more effective at driving improvement in teacher practice, as research indicates that PD activities are more likely to be effective if they are part of a coherent program of ongoing learning, rather than a series of disconnected, short-term experiences.⁴³

By imposing greater coherence between teachers' individual goals for growth and those that have been set at the school or district level, states can help teachers focus their energy on connected, reinforcing goals, rather than on competing objectives for growth

But while state policy encourages this type of coherence, most states that incorporate PGPs in the renewal process do not provide explicit guidance for how teachers and their supervisors should set goals that reflect it. Few states go as far as Utah, where policy clearly states that:

(3)The professional learning plan shall be developed by taking into account: (a) the educator's professional goals; (b) curriculum relevant to the educator's current or anticipated assignment; (c) goals and priorities of the LEA and school; (d) available student data relevant to the educator's current or anticipated assignment; (e) feedback from the educator's yearly evaluation required under Section 53A-8a-301... [and] shall include two hours of professional learning on youth suicide prevention.⁴⁴

Without this level of specificity, educators may struggle to develop targeted, actionable goals to help structure their professional learning, significantly undermining the potential of the PGP model to drive

more meaningful, personalized growth.

Of course, most teachers are not operating in complete isolation when developing their professional growth plans: 11 of the 12 states that incorporate PGPs as part of the recertification process require teachers to get input or approval from evaluators, supervisors, or other entities when developing their PGPs. For these instructional leaders, specific guidance around the goal-setting is equally important because they are, in many instances, the only "check" in states' systems to ensure that the professional growth plans teachers create are ambitious, actionable, and likely to lead to meaningful learning.

In placing this responsibility on the shoulders of individual evaluators, supervisors, principals, and other instructional leaders, these states' PGP systems make several assumptions: first, that all of these educators have the training and expertise to support teachers as they parse data to identify actionable goals for improvement; second, that they have the grade-level and subject-matter expertise they need to help teachers select PD that is likely to address those specific goals; and third, that they will have sufficient time to devote to providing sound advice and informed approval to potentially dozens of educators.

Finally, some states require teachers to create and fulfill one PGP as part of the recertification process and another as part of the performance evaluation process. By creating two separate processes, these states send teachers one of two signals: either that the purpose of the renewal process is different from the purpose of the evaluation process (even though having a PGP as part of both indicates that a primary objective of both is professional growth), or, that the state does not have a coherent approach to promoting professional learning, and is indeed making two separate, overlapping asks of teachers to improve their professional skills and knowledge. Both are detrimental to instilling a positive culture of professional development.

Tracking Progress Toward PGPs

While teachers must complete their PGPs in order to be eligible to renew their license, the process states use to determine completion rarely includes an authentic appraisal of teachers' professional growth (see **Data Supplement, Table 4**). Take, for example, the "Application for Renewal" form that teachers in Virginia must use to document the completion of 180-points worth of PD, as outlined in their professional development plans.⁴⁵ After a series of yes/no questions (including "Have you ever been the subject of a founded complaint of child abuse or neglect by a child protection agency?"), teachers are asked to list the activities they have completed, assign a point value to each activity (roughly 1 point for each hour of work, 30 points per college credit, or 90 points for a published book), and get an advisor to verify they have completed those activities as confirmed by transcripts, conference agendas, copies of published articles, or attendance lists. Nowhere on the form must teachers acknowledge the goals of their professional development plans or show evidence of having met them.

In Kansas, teachers are not required to demonstrate that their PD has improved their practice, but they can earn "extra credit" toward renewal if they take the initiative to do so. Teachers earn one PD point for every clock-hour of in-service education they complete, but they can choose to double the number of points they earn by presenting evidence to their local professional development council demonstrating that they have applied the skills or knowledge gained from the initial PD in a classroom setting. And, if they can show that they have improved student performance by applying their new skills and knowledge, they can triple the number of points they earned from the initial PD, accelerating them on their pathway to re-certification.⁴⁶

This unique approach encourages teachers to be more intentional about incorporating takeaways from their PD experiences into their day-to-day practice. However, it is not clear what constitutes acceptable evidence of application or impact in Kansas, what the standard might be to achieve this "multiplier effect," or how the standard might be applied differently from one jurisdiction to another—all questions that have implications for the quality of evidence teachers might present and their perceptions of the rigor of the process. One Kansas state official offered that, even though the state's original intent was for teachers to demonstrate a longer-term application of new learning and skills to be eligible for additional points, "one unintended consequence [of this absence of guidance] has been a very literal interpretation of the policy: 'I learned x yesterday, applied it today, and will submit for points tomorrow'."

Kansas' reliance on local professional development councils is also rare. In each local education agency, the professional development council provides initial approval of teachers' independent development plans, and later must confirm that the activities teachers submitted as evidence did meet the goal(s) outlined in their plans, as well as other state requirements for licensure renewal, in order for teachers to qualify for license renewal by the state.⁴⁷ This process holds true even for teachers who are not seeking to "multiply" their PD points. Ohio was the only other state that appeared to use a similar approach in this scan of state policies. This type of group approach to assessing whether or not teachers have completed their PGPs, and grown professionally as a result, has the potential to inject more reliability and validity into the process than an approach which relies solely on teacher supervisors.⁴⁸

While teachers must complete their PGPs in order to be eligible to renew their license, the process states use to determine completion rarely includes an authentic appraisal of teachers' professional growth

However, none of these states—Kansas, Ohio, or Georgia—requires the assessing body or individual to employ a rubric or other standardized assessment tool to aid the decision-making process. Instead, assessors have broad autonomy to determine whether teachers have made sufficient progress on their PGPs

and, by extension, whether they are eligible to renew their licenses. This, in turn, could undermine the systems’ abilities to enforce high-quality professional learning on a consistent basis and, as with educator evaluation systems, undermine educators’ trust and valuation of the system overall.⁴⁹

Experimenting with Better Measures of Teacher Learning

In contrast to other states, Kentucky’s Continuing Education Option (CEO)—one of multiple pathways Kentucky teachers can take to renew their standard license—employs a detailed evaluation rubric (see **Appendix C: Kentucky CEO Portfolio Assessment Form**) to more objectively assess how and how much teachers have grown while completing continuing education for recertification. Teachers completing the CEO program know from the outset that this rubric will be used to score their portfolios, which must include evidence of student learning and “of professional growth over time in: a) content knowledge; b) instructional and student assessment practices; and c) professional demonstration and publication skills.”⁵⁰ In addition, the portfolios must contain evidence “that all Kentucky Teacher Standards Advanced Level Performance indicators...have been met.”⁵¹ Teachers also know their portfolios will be scored in a rigorous, double-blind process by a committee of educators and experts selected and trained by the state’s Educator Professional Standards Board (EPSB) expressly for this purpose.

Designed to be both highly objective and highly personalized, the CEO allows teachers holding Kentucky’s standard teaching certificate to renew their certificates by developing a custom, multi-year plan for growth, based on a self-assessment of their own needs for growth and a consideration of their school’s growth plan and student assessment data.⁵² Though a teacher’s plan can include many of the same types of activities allowed in a more typical recertification process (in fact, teachers must complete six credit hours of graduate coursework as part of the CEO process), these must all be clearly linked to their goals. Teachers must also create an instructional unit that draws on what they have

learned, implement that unit, revise and reflect on the unit based on student assessment data, and then publicly present the results of their project in a way that contributes to the knowledge base of the profession, at the school, district, state, and/or the national level. They then submit a portfolio of reflections, artifacts, and other evidence of this work to the EPSB-contracted scoring team for final evaluation.

The structured goal-setting process (which is also scored using a rubric, as shown in Appendix B) and the emphasis on the application of professional learning are promising aspects of the CEO model and draw on best practices in adult learning. But it is the scoring process—specifically, the reliance on an objective, performance-based assessment of teachers’ learning—that sets Kentucky apart from other states that employ PGP models and promotes more meaningful professional learning for those who complete the process.

However, the Continuing Education Option is only one pathway for teacher licensure renewal in Kentucky and the state has not incentivized teachers to pursue it over the more traditional renewal route. Although the CEO pathway is cheaper, in most cases, the vast majority of teachers elect instead to amass a requisite number of graduate-level credits at higher education institutions. Fewer than 800 candidates have completed the CEO since it was first made available in the 1999–2000 school year,⁵³ and many of that number have been rural teachers with limited access to higher education institutions.⁵⁴

This low number is not due to a high failure rate, but instead to low take-up. In the fall of 2017, only 28 candidates were pursuing this route to licensure

renewal.⁵⁵ Teachers in Kentucky have tended to prefer the renewal-by-credit route, which has the advantage of being both familiar and ultimately more portable than the other renewal options available to them: teachers who do *not* complete the CEO program must eventually earn master's degrees to renew their professional license, and master's degrees are more widely recognized when teachers seek to transfer their teaching

licenses to other states. Despite the level of growth and relevant learning the CEO represents—and significant evidence indicating that teachers who hold master's degrees do not perform better on the job than their peers with lower degrees—master's degrees continue to be seen as a greater marker of professional competence and prestige than the performance-based CEO process.⁵⁶

It is the scoring process—specifically, the reliance on an objective, performance-based assessment of teachers' learning—that sets Kentucky apart from other states that employ PGP models and promotes more meaningful professional learning for those who complete the process.

CHALLENGES TO MOVING TO A PROFESSIONAL-GROWTH FOCUSED RECERTIFICATION SYSTEM

While the CEO approach in Kentucky is a strong model for promoting meaningful professional learning, its labor-intensive process and limited reach raises legitimate questions about how feasible it would be to roll out at scale. Similar to National Board certification, the CEO process requires the selection and training of high-quality assessors, and a process for ensuring interrater reliability. Given the administrative lift this entails, the state has not made a push to market this approach as the preferred avenue for renewal. As such, even in Kentucky, most teachers still qualify for recertification based on the accumulation of time-based credits that may or may not represent meaningful professional learning.

In our interviews for this research, education officials from other states also raised concerns about the capacity required to implement meaningful implementation of a PGP-type model at scale. Many states task principals with approving teachers' goals and assessing their attainment. Some schools in some districts will have a cadre of instructional leaders up to the task, but, as the introduction of teacher evaluation systems has made abundantly clear, many will not.⁵⁷ Though training school leaders to perform these duties is worthwhile—not just for the sake of PGP models, but for instructional leadership more generally—it can also be expensive and time-consuming. And, all the training in the world cannot create significantly more hours in the day for already-stretched school leaders.⁵⁸

Moving to a truly learning-and-improvement-focused renewal model has challenges other than scale, several of them political in nature. For example, state education officials overseeing teacher relicensure often work closely with institutions of higher education, and some voiced concerns about the negative impact moving away from a continuing education credit model for renewal would have on the predictability of income streams at these institutions. And in states where the responsibilities for licensure renewal and in-service professional learning are performed by separate divisions or entities (e.g., the Professional Standards Board and Department of Education, respectively) a renewal model that attempts to more seamlessly blend the two may encounter competing interests or concerns about stepping onto another's turf.

Based on evidence from high-stakes teacher evaluation systems, another concern is that local supervisors or committees may apply lower-than-intended standards out of fear that they will be responsible for ending a colleague's career or will be involved in a protracted legal battle.⁵⁹ And with more and more education monitoring and oversight

being pushed to the local level in other areas, many school and district administrators may resist taking on another new responsibility.

Recent changes to recertification policy in Wisconsin, which in 2017 rescinded its PGP model for renewal and moved to a lifetime license for all teachers, highlight another such challenge. While state policymakers touted the move as a cost-saving approach for teachers and for the state, it was also viewed as a way to "expand the pool" of teachers at a time of shortage by reducing the bureaucratic process surrounding PGPs. While no evidence exists to suggest that teachers leave the profession because the recertification process is arduous, anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers in Wisconsin had complained about duplication between the processes required for licensure renewal and for performance evaluation.⁶⁰

If stakeholders do not support more rigorous growth-focused renewal policies, it will be difficult for states to make headway in instituting them. The next sections provide ideas for how states can mitigate these challenges.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

For all of the recent focus on the knowledge and competencies individuals need to attain an initial teaching license or advance to earn a standard license, there has been scant attention paid to the requirements teachers must meet to maintain a standard license. Though there is broad consensus that teachers should periodically take steps to renew their professional licenses—50 states require it in some fashion—there is little clarity around what renewal is intended to accomplish or agreement on what that process should look like. While most states do state a clear purpose for licensure overall and for professional development, they do not state the rationale for the intersection of the two as part of the licensure renewal process.

In fact, although recertification is ostensibly intended to foster a culture of ongoing professional growth, this analysis of teacher licensure renewal policies in all 50 states and the District of Columbia finds that the policies undergirding the licensure renewal system frequently conflict with what is known about best practices in adult learning and discourage more effective professional development pathways. Given recent estimates that large districts spend roughly \$18,000 on professional learning per teacher each year, not including the money teachers spend out of their own pockets for continuing education, this is a huge missed opportunity.⁶¹

In general, most states' renewal requirements prioritize the accumulation of time-based credits accrued through either formal collegiate coursework or traditional PD experiences such as in-service

days, seminars, or online modules—short-term events that are often disconnected from one another and poorly matched with teachers' needs for improvement, making them unlikely to produce meaningful growth. These types of policies do nothing to encourage the sustained, targeted, and personalized learning opportunities that research shows are most likely to improve teachers' performance, favoring instead a one-size-fits all approach that offers convenience, often at the expense of quality.

Other states' renewal systems give lip service to incorporating more meaningful professional learning approaches without aligning policy requirements with activities likely to lead to learning, perpetuating a compliance-oriented culture around renewal-focused PD that fails to meet the professional needs of America's teachers, or the learning needs of their students. For example, about a quarter of U.S. states have adopted some type of Professional Growth Plan (PGP) system as a vehicle to better align the activities teachers complete as part of the licensure renewal process with their needs for improvement. But in practice, many of these policies have continued to focus on counting credits, which can hardly illustrate whether teachers have learned or acquired new skills through their professional development experiences.

A few states—including Georgia, Kentucky, Kansas, and Tennessee—have made some strides in incorporating a more vigorous assessment of professional growth into the renewal process,

through PGPs or otherwise, and there is much to learn from their efforts. While aspects of each of these systems hold promise, for now, no state has yet developed a comprehensive approach to ensuring that the professional development teachers engage in as part of licensure renewal is actually helping them improve.

Some may point to a requirement of demonstrated progress on professional learning plans as another example of policymakers failing to trust teachers, or the bureaucratization of teaching. It is a fair concern, given several states' current approaches to incorporating PGPs into the renewal process. However, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' (NBPTS) certification process is proof that this approach can be done in a meaningful manner: NBPTS' certification process incorporates a high-quality, systematic external assessment of a teacher's professional learning and growth performed by trained reviewers, and the typical National Board certified teacher would describe the process as an authentic learning experience that requires focus and reflection, not a series of hoop-jumping.⁶²

In fact, 15 states already recognize certification by the NBPTS as the gold standard for professional teaching practice, and award automatic license renewal to those teachers who choose to complete their National Board certification during the renewal period, with an additional 15 states providing full or partial credit toward licensure renewal. But, with current teacher working conditions, compensation, and status, requiring *all teachers* to complete the costly, time-intensive, challenging National Board certification process will prove untenable. For now, using the license renewal process to encourage some teachers to pursue National Board Certification and embracing standard license renewal processes that strive to replicate some of the elements of National Board Certification for all teachers—such as reflection on practice, submission of evidence of impact on practice and on student learning, and multiple assessors using a common assessment framework—could be a feasible middle ground.

Putting meaningful PGP systems in place that align with best practices in adult learning will require

additional resources: time and energy and money.⁶³ But this expenditure has the potential to provide a greater return on investment than many current professional development offerings and activities and could be funded with federal dollars under Title II of the Elementary & Secondary Education Act.

For now, using the license renewal process to encourage some teachers to pursue National Board Certification and embracing standard license renewal processes that strive to replicate some of the elements of National Board Certification for all teachers—such as reflection on practice, submission of evidence of impact on practice and on student learning, and multiple assessors using a common assessment framework—could be a feasible middle ground

Until states prioritize demonstrations of learning over time spent, professional development activities tied to teacher license renewal are unlikely to yield significant improvements in teacher practice or, it follows, student achievement. But states can take the lead and change the culture of educator professional development by re-envisioning their licensure renewal systems. More robust evaluation systems that draw upon state learning and professional standards provide an opportunity to identify—and measure growth on—specific teacher learning needs more adeptly than at any point in the past, but most states and districts have not harnessed their full potential for doing so.⁶⁴

States unwilling to try to assess whether the professional development teachers are undertaking toward licensure renewal is of any benefit to them or their students should remove licensure renewal requirements altogether and offer lifetime licenses.⁶⁵ But for states willing to make the renewal process meaningful, we offer the following recommendations.

Recommendations

States should replace licensure renewal systems that allow teachers to renew their standard licenses through time-oriented measures with approaches that more directly measure whether professional learning and growth have occurred. These new approaches should draw upon learnings from states that have been early adopters to replicate what is working and eschew what is not. Additionally, such approaches should:

1. **Ensure teachers choose professional learning based on demonstrated needs for growth.**

Require that the vast majority of professional learning a teacher engages in that counts toward recertification be clearly tied to an area where s/he or his/her students have demonstrated room for further growth. This could also push teacher supervisors to focus on providing more nuanced teacher practice ratings and feedback.

Further Considerations

- *Several early adopter states, including Kentucky and Kansas, have found that when a traditional “seat time” model exists in addition to a more meaningful route to licensure focused on professional growth, uptake of the latter option is minimal. To have an impact, need-based professional growth should be the primary, if not sole, route to renewal.*
- *Stipulate what types of data should be considered during goal-setting and assigning clear responsibilities and expectations to teachers, supervisors, or other entities for determining appropriate goals. This process may look different for “proven” teachers versus novice or lower-performing teachers, such as in Georgia, but no teacher should be left out of the process.*
- *Encourage teachers’ individual plans to align with district- or school-based improvement goals to promote greater coherence across improvement efforts.*
- *Acknowledge that there will be instances where a state or district goal may be better met by*

more universal PD, as long as the purpose is clear to those attending and the requiring entity is intentional about following up to assess implementation and impact. Examples include when state standards change, or when data show the need for training in a particular competency, such as Utah’s suicide prevention training requirement.

2. **Invest in implementation capacity, particularly around the assessment of meaningful professional learning for licensure renewal.**

Create robust systems to manage the processes through which teachers’ PGPs are created and assessed. States that devolve implementation responsibilities to the local level must provide clear guidance, ongoing training, sample resources, and some level of oversight to ensure high-quality, consistent implementation that delivers on the promise of professional learning to enhance teacher practice.

Further Considerations

- *Develop materials such as sample growth plans and assessment rubrics that set a high, yet reasonable, bar and encourage or require use of them. Kentucky’s CEO rubrics for goal-setting and for assessing whether goals are met are high-quality examples of such materials (see Appendix B and C for examples of these tools).*
- *Tasking district-level professional development councils, such as those in Kansas and Ohio, with assessing goals and measuring learning is a more promising approach than putting these responsibilities solely on teacher supervisors. States should provide guidance on selecting members for such councils (e.g., high-performing, have a “growth mindset,” represent different grade spans and subject areas, etc.) and audit outcomes to ensure state objectives are being met.*
- *If the PGP approach is expected to be implemented by school principals, consider funding “New School Leader models” which allow principals to focus further*

on instructional leadership by providing additional staff capacity at the school-level site. Iowa is one state that provides support for such roles, although not specifically tied to licensure renewal.⁶⁶

- Experiment with new methods for more objectively assessing professional learning in licensure renewal, such as micro-credentials (see **Micro-credentials: State Considerations for Licensure Renewal** on page 29 for more insights on how to do so). Tennessee is one state piloting the use of micro-credentials as part of its relicensure process.

3. Explore incentives to promote meaningful professional growth for all teachers as part of the renewal process.

Create rewards for authentic engagement in a PGP process and demonstrated growth, and consequences for those unable or unwilling to do so.

Further Considerations

- Avoid trying to reward top-performing teachers by exempting them from professional learning requirements. While rewarding high-performers is a worthy goal, this decision may inadvertently discourage such teachers from pursuing more challenging professional growth and leadership opportunities that research shows are necessary to keep them engaged in the profession.⁶⁷ Additionally, such policies may create a negative connotation with having a PGP.
- To lower the stakes for a learning-driven renewal process, consider creating tiered licensure systems that allow for advancement and/or demotion of licensure type based on level of growth attained, rather than revoking a license entirely. For example, a teacher who exceeded the goals identified could be recommended for an advanced license that bestows additional benefits, while a teacher who fell far short of the goals could move back to a lesser license type. Other alternatives would be to follow Pennsylvania's example and allow teachers whose licenses become inactive to substitute

teach for up to 90 days, or to shift teachers not meeting the renewal standard into different school roles (e.g., teaching assistants, etc.) until they can meet their goals and reactivate their license. A pilot would allow the incorporation of stakeholder feedback and the chance to assess unintended consequences of the policy shift before completely revamping the system.

- Provide the educators responsible for helping teachers set and assess professional goals and learning at the local level with incentives to fulfill the role, such as by encouraging or requiring release time or stipends. For example, Kansas allows educators on its local professional development committees to count the experience toward their own professional growth for renewal purposes.

4. Reduce duplication and ensure coherence throughout state systems that incorporate educator development.

Align elements of professional development in educator evaluation and support systems, school improvement systems, and educator licensure systems to minimize redundancies or conflicts. This must go beyond aligning policy language to breaking down silos between the various divisions responsible for these areas at the state level in order to coordinate and integrate training and resources.

Further Considerations

- A clear place for integration is with PGPs that already exist as part of state teacher evaluation systems. States that do not currently include a PGP as part of evaluation should consider doing so when incorporating one into their licensure renewal process.
- Because teacher evaluation systems measure many aspects of teaching other than professional growth, evaluation ratings should not be the sole determinant of eligibility for renewal of a standard license. However, evaluation ratings would be an appropriate way to determine eligibility for licensure advancement (either from initial to standard, or standard to advanced).

5. Develop data systems to evaluate the relevance and impact of professional development at a more macro level.

Invest in infrastructure to collect data on and analyze different forms of professional development, including information about the format of offerings, providers, instructors, and assessments.

Further Considerations

- *Eventually, information from these systems should be made available to help districts and school-level administrators make decisions about what PD to offer or recommend, and to whom, as well as for the state to assess quality of various PD offerings by eligible providers.*

Micro-credentials: State Considerations for Licensure Renewal

Micro-credentials (MCs) have recently gained momentum as a high-potential approach to more directly measure teachers' professional learning. But states looking to incorporate MCs as part of the licensure recertification process must proceed thoughtfully toward implementation.

What are Micro-credentials?

Although educator awareness of micro-credentials is increasing, MCs are still much misunderstood. Despite some characterizations as “courses,” “online modules,” or “professional learning,” a micro-credential is *not professional development in and of itself*.ⁱ Rather, similar to other credentials, like degrees or diplomas, a MC provides public recognition of knowledge and skills held.ⁱⁱ Specifically, a teaching micro-credential is a verification of a discrete skill or competency that a teacher has demonstrated through the submission of evidence. That said, the granularity of teaching skills that micro-credentials are currently being used to assess still varies widely, from small and specific (e.g., “using wait time effectively”), to big and broad (e.g., “analyzing student work”).ⁱⁱⁱ

How Teaching Micro-credentials Work

A teacher earns a specific MC if the “issuer” [see below for definition] determines that the evidence s/he submitted demonstrating that skill meets the issuer’s definition of competence. While most issuers of MCs do provide suggested professional development resources to teachers working toward the micro-credential, when it comes to assessing competencies, many are agnostic about how teachers have attained them.^{iv} As such, a teacher who is already highly skilled in a particular area could earn an MC without engaging in any new learning, while a teacher who is newly developing a skill may need to engage in substantial formal and informal learning experiences before earning the same MC.

Several entities play a role in the micro-credentialing process for educators:



Technical providers provide a digital platform where MCs can be offered/issued/earned [e.g., BloomBoard/Digital Promise, National Education Association (NEA), etc.].



Issuers are organizations that develop the content and assessment for MC, oversee assessment of evidence submitted by educator, and award MCs to educators [e.g., the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University, Hope Street Group, Learning Forward, etc.]. Most technical providers are also issuers, but most issuers are not technical providers.



Earners are educators who collect and submit evidence demonstrating the teaching skill being assessed that meets the issuer's definition of competence for that MC.



Recognizers are entities such as states, districts, or schools that determine how MCs provide value to earners [e.g., continuing education credits, career pathways, etc.].

One element missing from the above process is an attempt to provide some quality control in order to ensure that the earner of a particular MC does in fact hold that skill. This has led the area of micro-credentials to be called the “Wild West.”^v

As in other fields, any entity that chooses to can be an issuer of a micro-credential, and not all issuers may hold a consistently high bar for earners in demonstrating competency. Digital Promise is an organization that has stepped in to play a quality control role in the education field, and is currently the most prominent organization in the teaching micro-credential space. In addition to playing a role as both technical provider and issuer, Digital Promise also works as a de facto “authorizer” or “accreditor” of the MCs issuers want to offer on its platform. Digital Promise has developed a transparent framework to guide the development of each micro-credential issued on its platform, and it works with prospective issuers in an iterative process to ensure that these basic tenets are met before the issuer can make the MC available to teachers.^{vi} Digital Promise also plays a vetting role for MCs offered on the NEA platform.^{vii}

Considerations for Licensure Renewal

As states consider incorporating MCs in their license renewal systems, they must keep relevance and rigor at the heart of their policies and practices to prevent micro-credentials from “becoming the next CEU.” States should ensure that the entities they allow to issue micro-credentials are assessing the skills MCs are intended to verify in a consistent, high-quality manner. States can create the capacity to do so themselves, or only accept micro-credentials that have already been vetted by an independent, unbiased authorizer, like Digital Promise.

Additionally, states should allow teachers to count micro-credentials toward licensure renewal only when MCs are clearly tied to areas of student need or teacher professional growth need—otherwise, teachers could attain MCs in areas they have already mastered, undermining the relicensure goal of continuing professional growth. As states move toward systems that require teachers to develop and fulfill personalized growth plans as part of the recertification process, they could also employ MCs to help assess whether teachers have

mastered skills they were endeavoring to develop. However, states should use caution in doing so. Because micro-credentials are more of a “black-and-white” indicator of demonstrated proficiency in a competency than a nuanced indicator of skill level (i.e., one cannot half-earn an MC), overreliance on MCs as part of recertification could actually work against the goal of promoting a culture of ongoing professional growth. That is, educators could point to the MC they earned for demonstrating a specific skill as evidence that they no longer need to focus on developing that skill. As one teacher wrote, “if professional development exists in a box, we’re likely to just check it off and move on.”^{viii} States will need to think deeply about the types of content and “grain-size” of micro-credentials that would be appropriate to offer toward recertification in this context (i.e., just how “micro” should a “micro-credential” be?).

In addition, to ensure teachers are encouraged and well-supported to take on challenging new skills through micro-credentials, states should ensure the provision of high-quality learning resources and supports aligned to each micro-credential offered toward recertification. Fortunately, the online format of micro-credentials allows them to be easily “tagged” to specific skills within a state’s teaching standards and teacher performance evaluation system to help point teachers to the areas most important for them to continue to develop. Supporting resources can be similarly tagged to guide teachers toward appropriate content.

ⁱElaine S. Povich, “To Improve Teacher Training, States Try ‘Micro Credentials’” Stateline (blog), The Pew Charitable Trusts, September 28, 2017, <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/09/28/to-improve-teacher-training-states-try-micro-credentials>; Candice McQueen et. al, *Personalized Learning: Task Force Report* (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Education, 2016); Jenny DeMonte, *Micro-Credentials for Teachers: What Three Early Adopter States Have Learned So Far* (Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 2017).

ⁱⁱRecognition often occurs in the form of a “digital badge” that can be shared publicly online, although digital badges are also often provided for participation without needing to demonstrate competency. For more on this topic, see Michael Horn, “Taming the Wild West of Digital Badges and Credentials,” *Forbes*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhorn/2017/10/12/taming-the-wild-west-of-digital-badges-and-credentials/#3b75ece92cf0>.

ⁱⁱⁱ“Sample Micro-credentials,” Digital Promise, accessed July 9, 2018, <http://digitalpromise.org/initiative/educator-micro-credentials/sample-micro-credentials/>; Mary Strain, *Competency-Based Micro-Credentials for Educators: Powerful Lessons from Two Years in the Field* (New York: Teaching Matters, 2016).

^{iv}Stephen Sawchuk, “Can Micro-Credentialing Salvage Teacher PD?” *Education Week* 35, no. 26 (2016): 1, 12, <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/03/30/can-micro-credentialing-salvage-teacher-pd.html>.

^vMichael Horn, “Taming the Wild West of Digital Badges and Credentials,” *Forbes*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhorn/2017/10/12/taming-the-wild-west-of-digital-badges-and-credentials/#3b75ece92cf0>.

^{vi}Jennifer Kabaker (director, Educator Micro-Credentials, Digital Promise), personal correspondence with authors, May 29, 2018. Digital Promise’s framework requires that any micro-credential offered on its platform: 1) focuses on a single competency; 2) uses a key method backed by research; 3) requires the submission of evidence; and 4) includes a rubric or scoring guide. For more details, see “How it Works,” Digital Promise, accessed July 9, 2018, <http://digitalpromise.org/initiative/educator-micro-credentials/how-it-works/>.

^{vii}“Micro-credential Guidance,” Reference Center, National Education Association, accessed August 27, 2018, <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Micro-credential-guidance-pdf-june18.pdf>.

^{viii}Brian Curtin, “Making a Case for ‘Timely, Purposeful, Progressive’ PD,” *Education Week Teacher* (blog), December 6, 2017, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/12/06/making-a-case-for-timely-purposeful-progressive.html>.

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESEARCH APPROACH DETAILS

New America reviewed publicly available documents pertaining to current teacher recertification policies across all 50 states and the District of Columbia from March–November 2017. We asked officials in each state to verify and update the information we collected (via email), and followed up when necessary to glean additional information and context through telephone interviews. Officials had an opportunity to verify the information again in the spring of 2018. As of July 2018, we had received feedback from 47 states (four did not respond at any point: Alaska, Alabama, DC, and Maine). At times, we had to use judgment to label policies that either did not fit neatly into our identified categories, or where information in state policy documents did not align with information provided by state officials.

From this scan of state policies, we identified states that have adopted or are moving toward licensure renewal approaches that aim to promote high-impact professional learning and demonstrable professional growth. In particular, we focused on states building licensure renewal systems that prioritize the needs of individual teachers, their schools, and the students they serve.

Where we found examples of innovative policies pushing in this direction, we conducted phone interviews with state officials to learn more about the origins, mechanisms, promises, and challenges of each system. The **Data Supplement** includes the full set of data collected as part of this research (available at https://s3.amazonaws.com/newamericadotorg/documents/Data_Supplement_Rethinking_Relicensure_FINAL.pdf).

APPENDIX B:

KENTUCKY CONTINUING EDUCATION OPTION (CEO) PLAN SCORING RUBRIC

[Shared with Permission of Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board]

CEO Plan Rubric is different from the CEO Portfolio Rubric. The CEO Plan Rubric is designed to ensure you have developed a completed CEO Plan. The CEO Plan shall include well-developed sets of goals, objectives, and activities that are based on identified needs; are aligned to the State and National Standards; and have the depth and breadth that will allow you to provide artifacts as evidence that you have met the indicators of the Kentucky Teacher Standards.

An external scoring team will need a complete understanding of the outcomes in order to effectively score your plan. Using the CEO Plan Rubric and guidance from your coach, you will develop a plan that meets your individual professional growth needs. Include specific details that address each of the components of the CEO process. It is important to address any deficiencies in the Plan identified by your coach prior to submission.

There are seven major scoring components for your plan. You may be scored a 2, 1, or 0 in each of the following categories:

Teacher, School, and Community Profile: The in-depth demographic data that puts your plan in context.

Needs: The specific content, strategy, leadership areas that your professional development goals address the measurable needs of your students and school.

Goals: The three broad goal statements that define your scope of work for the CEO.

Objectives: The six measurable sets of actions you and your students will take to reach your goals.

Professional Development Growth Activities and Time Line: The specific activities you and your students will accomplish to produce products and results that provide empirical evidence that you are meeting your objectives and reaching your goals. The time line defines when and in which order those activities take place.

Leadership Activities: The Leadership Project is aligned with the leadership goals and objectives. The leadership project goal shall be based upon established needs of the students, school, district.

Graduate Courses: Identify and describe within the plan a minimum of six (6) hours of graduate courses that align to the goals of the professional growth plan.

Each area on the rubric shall receive a score of 2, 1, or 0.

2 = The area is fully demonstrated in the plan and will be approved.

1 = The area is partially demonstrated in the plan.

0 = The area is not demonstrated or clearly demonstrated in the plan.

There are a maximum of fourteen (14) total points possible. You shall receive a minimum score of 12 for plan approval.

You shall not receive a “0” on any area and have your plan approved. You shall re-submit the plan addressing the area(s) in which you received a “0” or “1.”

NOTE: Do not begin to implement your plan until you have received a passing score from the scoring team.

CEO Professional Development Plan Scoring Rubric

| | 2 | 1 | 0 | Score |
|--|---|---|--|-------|
| Teacher, School, and Community, Profile | Includes the following demographic information: ethnic diversity, number of low socio-economic students, and location of school (rural, suburban, urban); provides information about facilities, resources, administration, teachers, parents, or community that illustrates the school's learning culture; outlines teaching history and personal talents; provides context for professional growth activities and new student learning. | Includes some of the requested demographic information; includes some information about facilities, resources, administration, teachers, parents or community, teaching history, and personal talents. Some context is provided for professional growth activities and new student learning. | Includes little or no demographic information; includes little or no information that would help reviewers understand school and culture. | |
| Needs | Provides clear evidence of school and teacher needs in instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills with supporting evidence based upon school or district data and community data when applicable. | Provides some clear evidence of school and teacher needs in instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills with supporting evidence based upon school or district and community data when applicable. | Little or no evidence of school and teacher needs in instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills with supporting evidence based upon school or district data and community data when applicable. | |
| Goals | Writes an instructional goal (three total) for each of the three required areas: instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills. The broad goal statements align with one or more of Kentucky's six learner goals and correspond to the state or national content standards and the Kentucky Teacher Standards Advanced-Level Performances. All goals reflect the needs as established in the plan with long-term benefits for the students and teachers. | Writes an instructional goal (three total) for each of the three required areas: instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills. The broad goal statements have minimal alignment with one or more of Kentucky's six learner goals and loosely correspond to the state or national content standards, or the Kentucky Teacher Standards Advanced-Level Performances. Some goals reflect the needs as established in the plan with long-term benefits for the students and teachers. | Does not write an instructional goal for each of the three required areas: instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills. Goal statements have little or no alignment to one or more of Kentucky's six learner goals and little or no correspondence to the state or national content standards, or the Kentucky Teacher Standards Advanced-Level Performances. | |

| | 2 | 1 | 0 | Score |
|---|--|---|---|-------|
| Objectives | Writes one measureable teacher and one measureable student objective for each of the three required areas in instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills (six total). The measureable objectives identify audience, the behavior, the time, the environment, and the degree of proficiency that align to state or national content standards, core content and Learning Goals or Academic Expectations. | Writes one measureable teacher and one measureable student objective for each of the three required areas in instructional content, instructional strategies, and leadership skills (six total). The measureable objectives identify audience, the behavior, the time, the environment, and the degree of proficiency but have minimal alignment to state or national content standards, core content and Learning Goals or Academic Expectations. The candidate misidentifies objectives by creating activities. | Does not write measureable objectives. | |
| Professional Development Growth Activities and Time Line | Applies the Levels of Professional Development to reach each teacher objective. Lists specific activities, level of development, time frame, and professional development providers/resources that impact student learning and professional growth. Establishes a time line that incorporates major activities for each objective. The professional development aligns with the definition of high-quality professional development as established by state or federal guidelines. Graduate courses align with the professional growth plan. | Some of the professional growth activities align with the Levels of Professional Development and high-quality professional development as state and federal guidelines. There is some evidence of quality providers or resources that impact student learning and professional growth. There is weak alignment between graduate courses and the professional growth plan. | Professional growth activities have little or no alignment with the Levels of Professional Development and high-quality professional development as defined by state and federal guidelines. Little or no alignment between graduate courses and the professional growth plan. | |
| Graduate Courses | The graduate courses align with the professional growth plan. There is evidence establishing six credit hours at the graduate level, or there is an approval from EPSB staff to provide a combination of graduate or undergraduate content courses. | There is some alignment of the graduate courses with the professional growth plan. There is some evidence establishing six credit hours at the graduate level, or there is an approval from EPSB staff to provide a combination of graduate or undergraduate content courses. | There is no alignment of the graduate courses with the professional growth plan. There is little or no evidence establishing six credit hours at the graduate level, or there is no approval from EPSB staff to provide a combination of graduate or undergraduate content courses. | |
| Leadership Project | The Leadership Project aligns the professional growth plan and the leadership guide provided in the online modules. | The Leadership Project has some alignment with the professional growth plan and the leadership guide provided in the online modules. | The Leadership Project has little or no alignment with the professional growth plan and the leadership guide provided in the online modules. | |
| Final Score | | | | |

APPENDIX C: KENTUCKY CEO PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT FORM (ABRIDGED)

[Shared with Permission of Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board]

CEO Professional Development Portfolio Rubric (To be used for Rank I and Rank II change)

The Professional Development Portfolio shall be assessed using this evaluation framework.
This framework allows the teacher to earn a rank change by:

Demonstrating continuing growth over time on each Kentucky Teacher Standard Advanced-Level Performances.
Additional indicators are incorporated specific to the CEO process, but all Advanced-Level Performances are included. A passing portfolio shall demonstrate acceptable performance on each standard and each indicator.

Each area on the rubric shall receive a score of 2, 1, or 0.

2 = the indicator is fully demonstrated in the portfolio.

1 = the indicator is partially demonstrated.

0 = the indicator is not clearly demonstrated.

You shall not receive a “0” on any indicator and earn your rank change.

You shall receive two “1’s” in each standard and the rest “2’s” to earn a passing score.

A perfect score shall be all “2’s.”

Sample from Kentucky CEO Portfolio Assessment Form—Standard 2: Design & Plan Instruction

STANDARD 2: THE TEACHER DESIGNS AND PLANS INSTRUCTION

The teacher designs or plans instruction that develops student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge.

| Score | The teacher describes and illustrates how he or she over time: | Notes |
|-----------------------|--|-------|
| | 2.1 Develops significant objectives aligned with standards. | |
| Expected Performances | a. Develops challenging and appropriate learning objectives that are aligned with local, state, national standards and are based on students' needs, interests and abilities (e.g., Kentucky Program of Studies, Core Content, Learning Goals or Academic Expectations, College Readiness Standards, and National Content Standards to plan units and lessons) | |
| | 2.2 Uses contextual data to design instruction relevant to students. | |
| Expected Performances | a. Plans and designs instruction that is based on significant contextual and pre-assessment data. | |
| Expected Performances | b. Builds and modifies instruction on students' prior knowledge, cultural backgrounds, interests, abilities, learning styles, and changes to classroom environment to design developmentally appropriate learning experiences. | |
| | 2.3 Plans assessments to guide instruction and measure learning objectives. | |
| Expected Performances | a. Develops well-designed assessments that align with learning objectives, guide instruction, and measure learning results. | |
| Expected Performances | b. Plans multiple assessment strategies that are linked to short- and long-term instructional goals. Analyzes assessment data to revise instruction. | |
| | 2.4 Plans instructional strategies and activities that address learning objectives for all students. | |
| Expected Performances | a. Plans a learning sequence using instructional strategies and activities that build on students' prior knowledge and address learning objectives. | |
| | 2.5 Plans instructional strategies and activities that facilitate multiple levels of learning. | |
| Expected Performances | a. Plans a learning sequence using strategies and activities that foster the development of higher-order thinking. | |
| Expected Performances | b. Uses new knowledge of content and instructional skills to design challenging and engaging units and lessons. | |

Notes

¹Georgia Professional Standards Commission, *Professional Learning Guidelines: Supporting the Implementation of GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 Renewal Requirements* (Atlanta, 2017), 3.

²Georgia State Education Finance Commission, *Recommendations of the State Education Finance Study Commission: Issue Papers* (Atlanta, 2012), 31; Georgia Professional Standards Commission, *Professional Learning Guidelines Supporting the Implementation of GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36* (Atlanta, 2017), 7.

³Melissa Tooley and Kaylan Connally, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016).

⁴While this paper focuses on the connection between professional development requirements and relicensure, some states require teachers to earn PD outside of the relicensure process. For example, New Jersey has no continuing education requirements for relicensure, but does require school districts to provide PD opportunities to teachers.

⁵For more on this topic, see Stephanie Hirsh, “Choosing Between What Matters and What Counts,” *Education Week Teacher* (blog), March 4, 2015, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_forwards_pd_watch/2015/03/choosing_between_what_matters_and_what_counts.html.

⁶Melissa Tooley and Kaylan Connally, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016).

⁷Stephen Sawchuk, “Is Teacher Recertification Broken?” *Education Week Teacher* (blog), December 5, 2017, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/12/06/is-teacher-recertification-broken.html>.

⁸In most states, determining which license was the standard license from public documents was straightforward, but in others, New America encountered conflicting public information (e.g., information on the state education agency website conflicted with language in state statute or regulations) or we found that the process of renewing what appeared to be the standard license required advancement to another license type (e.g., Kentucky and Maryland). In these instances, we consulted with the state entity responsible for licensure in determining which license was the “standard” license.

⁹Benjamin W. Frazier et. al., *National Survey on the Education of Teachers: Bulletin 1933, No. 10*. 6 vols. (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1935); *National Survey on the Education of Teachers: Bulletin 1933, No. 10, 1935, prepared in cooperation with the Office of Education* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1935).

¹⁰For more on this debate, see Jal Mehta and Joe Doctor, “Raising the Bar for Teaching,” *Phi Beta Kappan* 94, no. 7 (2013): 8–13; Leslie Brody, “How Do We Raise the Quality of Teachers?” *Wall Street Journal*, September 15, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-do-we-raise-the-quality-of-teachers-1442368896>; *Our Future, Our Teachers: The Obama Administration’s Plan for Teacher Education Reform and Improvement* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2011); Berrick Abramson, “Paperwork Does Not a Teacher Make,” TNTP (blog), March 6, 2014, <https://tntp.org/blog/post/paperwork-does-not-a-teacher-make>.

¹¹According to the National Council on Teacher Quality, these are the typical entry requirements, although 37 states issue emergency or provisional licenses which may waive these and other entry requirements imposed by states when issuing initial or standard teaching licenses. See 2014 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2015); and 2017 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2017).

¹²In the first three years after edTPA launched nationally in fall 2013, more than 100,000 aspiring educators submitted portfolios for scoring, with an overall pass rate around 75 percent. 2014 *edTPA Administrative Report* (Stanford, CA: edTPA, 2014); 2015 *edTPA Annual Administrative Report* (Stanford, CA: edTPA, 2015); 2016 *edTPA Annual Administrative Report* (Stanford, CA: edTPA, 2016); “Frequently Asked Questions,” *American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education*, accessed February 19, 2017, https://secure.aacte.org/apps/rl/res_get.php?fid=3148&ref=edtpa; *State Policy Overview* (Stanford, CA: edTPA, 2018); and Aaron Goldstein (Manager, State Policy and Relations, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education), email message to author, January 7, 2018.

¹³The edTPA assessment is subject-specific and can be used to evaluate candidates pursuing a career in any of 27 possible teaching areas. “About edTPA,” edTPA, accessed December 23, 2017, http://www.edtpa.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_AboutEdTPA.html.

¹⁴ In Wisconsin, teachers do not complete any PD to advance from the state's provisional license to the permanent license. Instead, they must complete six semesters of "successful experience" teaching (as defined by individual districts), and can renew the provisional license indefinitely, making it essentially the equivalent of a permanent license.

¹⁵ While these statistics from the National Council on Teacher Quality focus on demonstrating evidence of effectiveness (i.e., adequate performance for the role), our analysis focuses more intently on policies that ask teachers to demonstrate professional learning and growth. *2013 State Teacher Policy Yearbook* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2014), 9.

¹⁶ The Ohio Department of Education decided to significantly pare down the RESA and lighten requirements for participating mentor teachers in the 2017–18 school year due to feedback. "Ohio's Resident Educator Program Changes 2017-2018," Ohio Education Association, accessed March 18, 2018, <https://www.ohea.org/resources/professional-resources/ohios-resident-educator-program-changes-2017-2018/>; Matt Verber (executive director, Policy & Advocacy at Educopia), personal communication with authors, November 1, 2017.

¹⁷ Connecticut and Maryland require teachers holding "standard" professional licenses to advance to a higher certification level eventually.

¹⁸ For the purposes of this report, Washington, DC will be counted as a state to simplify discussion of summary statistics, as in this instance.

¹⁹ States' requirements vary from as few as three years in New Hampshire to as many as 12 years in Arizona.

²⁰ Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin offer lifetime or permanent licenses as the standard license type, but require some action (e.g., "registration") to maintain them. In Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania, for example, teachers must meet certain professional development requirements every five years to maintain an active license that allows them to teach in the state's public schools. In Wisconsin, teachers must log in to an online portal and submit a payment and background check every five years. North Carolina and North Dakota offer standard lifetime licenses to teachers who have taught for a significant number of years in the state (50 and 30, respectively), while Arkansas offers them to teachers age 62 and older and retired teachers. Several

states have teachers with "grandfathered" standard lifetime licenses, although the states no longer offer them. West Virginia offers a lifetime advanced license.

²¹ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, "Professional Educator's Licensure Renewal Process," accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/licensure/update/>. In 2017, North Carolina passed a bill that requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with local boards of education and the Board of Governors of the University of NC to revisit renewal policies every five years to ensure renewal remains a "mechanism for professional educators to renew continually their knowledge and professional skills" and to "integrate digital teaching and learning into the requirements for licensure renewal." NC General Statutes - Chapter 115C Article 20.

²² FL S. 1012.54, F.S.

²³ One state included in this tally, Kansas, allows teachers to renew if they have completed all of the components for NBPTS certification, even if they did not actually attain certification from the NBPTS. Another state, Florida, allows teachers to renew their licenses if they currently hold NBPTS certification in the same subject area as the license being renewed, even if the certificate was earned in a previous licensure period.

²⁴ Sixteen additional states award continuing education credit for NBPTS certification, but do not automatically grant renewal for it, although in some cases the credit equivalency may satisfy the state's full continuing education requirement. Montana, for example, requires 60 CEUs for renewal and awards 60 CEUs for NBPTS certification. We count states like Montana, where teachers must convert their NBPTS certification to CEUs, in the National Board certification category discussed in this paper's **Unpacking the "Continuing Education" Requirement** section.

²⁵ *The Rhode Island Certification Regulations: Issuance, Renewal, and Reinstatement of Certificates* (Providence: Rhode Island Board of Regents, 2018).

²⁶ States may require teachers in particular disciplines or classroom settings to complete additional requirements beyond those that all teachers must meet. This analysis only considers state requirements that all teachers must meet.

²⁷ Many states maintain additional routes for teachers seeking to transfer a standard teaching license issued by another state. Most require teachers to pass additional

assessments or complete coursework to transfer. According to the Education Commission of the States, just six states allow “full reciprocity,” meaning that teachers are immediately eligible to receive a standard teaching license with few (if any) additional requirements. For more on reciprocity, see *50-State Comparison: Teacher Licensure Reciprocity* (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2017).

²⁸ California’s standard license is called the Level II certificate. More details on the professional fitness application are available here: <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/educator-discipline/files/prof-fitness-instructions.pdf>.

²⁹ Teachers who do not have classroom experience can submit graduate credits in place of experience. *Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer in Nebraska Schools* (Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Education, 2016).

³⁰ Katie Loehrke, “3 ways to motivate high performers,” *The Business Journals*, July 27, 2016, <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/human-resources/2016/07/3-ways-to-motivate-high-performers.html>.

³¹ Some states also allow teachers to receive credits for renewing their NBPTS certification.

³² *Standard Teaching Certificate Renewal* (Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, 2017).

³³ Professional Standards Board, *Issuance and Renewal of Continuing License* (Dover: Delaware General Assembly, 2018), 1511 – 5.1.

³⁴ “Florida Educator Certification Renewal Requirements,” Florida Department of Education, accessed December 24, 2017, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/renewal-requirements/>.

³⁵ For information on states that allow micro-credentials to count toward CEUs, see Jenny DeMonte, *Micro-Credentials for Teachers: What Three Early Adopter States Have Learned So Far* (Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 2017). For more information on micro-credentials, see “How it Works,” Digital Promise Global, accessed June 1, 2018, <http://digitalpromise.org/initiative/educator-micro-credentials/how-it-works/> and Michael B. Horn and Thomas Arnett, “Competence-Based Learning for Teachers: Can Micro-Credentials Reboot Professional Development?” *Education Next* 17, no. 2

(2017): 94–95, <http://educationnext.org/competency-based-learning-teachers-micro-credentials-professional-development/>. For more information on Tennessee’s educator micro-credentials, and the provider of Tennessee’s educator micro-credential platform, see *Introduction to Micro-credentials* (Nashville: TN Department of Education, 2017) and “Educator Micro-credentials,” Digital Promise Global, accessed June 1, 2018, <http://digitalpromise.org/initiative/educator-micro-credentials/>.

³⁶ Most of the states experimenting with micro-credentials do not currently allow teachers to use them toward licensure renewal, however. In Tennessee, micro-credentials have been accepted as credit toward renewal in Tennessee since January 2017. See Tennessee State Board of Education, https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/5.502_Educator_Licensure_7-28-17.pdf and Paul Fleming, “Inching Toward Relicensure, One ‘Micro-credential’ at a Time,” interview by Stephen Sawchuk, *Education Week Teacher*, December 5, 2017, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/12/06/inching-toward-relicensure-one-micro-credential-at-a.html>.

³⁷ For additional recommendations on how states can ensure teacher evaluation and support systems are promoting teacher professional growth, see Kaylan Connally and Melissa Tooley, *Beyond Ratings: Re-envisioning State Teacher Evaluation Systems as Tools for Professional Growth* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016).

³⁸ Melissa Tooley, “What Does High-Quality Research Say about Developing Teacher Practice?” *Education Policy* (blog), New America, March 16, 2017, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/what-does-high-quality-research-say-about-developing-teacher-practice/>.

³⁹ Several researchers have documented the dearth of information and tools that would help teachers choose professional development experiences with impact. For example, see Gaysha Beard, *The Adult Learner, Professional Development, and the Literacy Coach: An Effective Professional Development Model* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010); Jal Mehta, Victorie Thiesen-Homer, David Braslow, and Adina Lopatin, *From Quicksand to Solid Ground: Building a Foundation to Support Quality Teaching* (Cambridge, MA: Transforming Teaching, 2015).

⁴⁰ For more insights on what high-quality research finds are PD best practices, see Melissa Tooley, “What Does High-Quality Research Say about Developing Teacher Practice?” *Education Policy* (blog), New America, March 16, 2017, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/what-does-high-quality-research-say-about-developing-teacher-practice/>.

⁴¹ *GaPSC Rule 505-2-.36 Renewal Requirements* (Atlanta: Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2017).

⁴² Teachers who receive an annual performance rating of Needs Development, Ineffective, or Unsatisfactory in the state’s Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (for annual performance evaluation) must develop a written Professional Learning Plan in lieu of PLGs.

⁴³ Sarah Archibald, Jane G. Coggshall, Andrew Croft, and Laura Goe, *High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources* (Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2011); Michael S. Garet, Andrew C. G. Porter, Laura Desimone, Beatrice F. Birman, and Kwang Yoon, “What Makes Professional Development Effective? Results from a National Sample of Teachers,” *American Education Research Journal* 38, no. 4 (2001): 915–945, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cdf7/8038608dc0de4cf8b0398eba7d28a2a0646a.pdf?_ga=2.130810191.1187615058.1528317474-1559690011.1528317474; William R. Penuel, Barry J. Fishman, Ryoko Yamaguchi, and Lawrence P. Gallagher, “What Makes Professional Development Effective? Strategies That Foster Curriculum Implementation,” *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 4 (2007): 921–958, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30069418>.

⁴⁴ *Rule R277-500-3. Educator License Renewal Requirements* (Salt Lake City: Utah Office of Administrative Rules, 2018), <https://rules.utah.gov/publicat/code/r277/r277-500.htm>.

⁴⁵ Division of Teacher Education and Licensure, *Virginia License Renewal Manual* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Education, 2017), 26.

⁴⁶ *Teacher Licensure and Accreditation, Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators 2017–2018* (Topeka: Kansas State Department of Education, 2017), 29.

⁴⁷ State regulations require teachers to develop a plan that includes activities in one or more of the following areas: (1) Content endorsement standards as adopted by the state board; (2) professional education standards as adopted by the state board; or (3) service

to the profession. *Teacher Licensure and Accreditation, Regulations and Standards for Kansas Educators 2017–2018* (Topeka: Kansas State Department of Education, 2017), 29; Lynn Bechtel (education program consultant, Teacher Licensure and Accreditation, Kansas State Department of Education), phone call with authors, June 6, 2018.

⁴⁸ For more on the effect of including multiple raters of teacher practice, see MET Project, *The Reliability of Classroom Observations by School Personnel* (Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, January 2013), <http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/resource/the-reliability-of-classroom-observations-by-school-personnel/>.

⁴⁹ For more on how states’ choices impact teachers’ trust and valuation of performance evaluation systems, see Kaylan Connally and Melissa Tooley, *Beyond Ratings: Re-envisioning State Teacher Evaluation Systems as Tools for Professional Growth* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016).

⁵⁰ Kentucky Administrative Regulation 16 KAR 8:030, *Continuing Education Option for Certificate Renewal and Rank Change*, 2010, <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/kar/016/008/030.pdf>.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² “Rank 2” teachers can earn their first licensure renewal by completing Phases 1 and 2 of the Continuing Education Option (within five years of initially earning a Rank 2 certificate); they are eligible for a second renewal of the Rank 2 certificate once their CEO portfolio earns a passing score from the scoring committee. Importantly, the CEO is only an option for teachers the first two times they renew their Rank 2 standard license. After that, teachers in Kentucky can coast on auto-pilot: the only requirements are three years of classroom teaching experience within the five-year renewal timeframe (or six graduate education credits). The CEO option can also be used for licensure advancement (from Rank 2 to Rank 1, which confers higher distinction and salary, but no specific leadership privileges), but only by teachers who have not previously used the CEO option to renew their Rank 2 certificate. Information from “Teacher Certification Renewal,” Division of Certification, Education Professional Standards Board, last modified March 8, 2018, <http://www.epsb.ky.gov/mod/page/view.php?id=340> and phone interviews with Bennett G. Boggs (director, Division of Educator Preparation, Assessment and Internship, Kentucky Education Professional

Standards Board) and Sherri Henley (program consultant, Division of Educator Preparation, Assessment and Internship, Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board), October 23, 2017 and November 7, 2017.

⁵³ This number includes teachers who used the Continuing Education Option to advance their licenses, so the number likely overstates the number of teachers who qualified for renewal of a standard license using the CEO pathway, to some degree.

⁵⁴ *Education Professional Standards Board: 2016–2017 Annual Report* (Frankfort, KY: EPSB, 2017)

⁵⁵ Sherri Henley (program consultant, Internship/Assessment, Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board), email to authors, November 7, 2017.

⁵⁶ Charles T. Clotfelter, Helen F. Ladd, and Jacob L. Vigdor, “How and Why Do Teacher Credentials Matter for Student Achievement?” *National Bureau of Economic Research* (NBER), no. 12828 (2007): 1–54, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12828.pdf>; Dan D. Goldhaber, Dominic J. Brewer, and Deborah J. Anderson, “A Three-Way Error Components Analysis of Educational Productivity,” *Education Economics* 7, no. 3 (1999): 199–208, <https://doi.org/10.1080/096452999000000018>; Thomas J. Kane, Jonah E. Rockoff, and Douglas O. Staiger, “What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness? Evidence from New York City,” *National Bureau of Economic Research* (NBER), no. 12155 (2006): 1–69, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w12155.pdf>; Daniel Aaronson, Lisa Barrow, and William Sander, “Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 25, no. 1 (2007): 95–135, <https://faculty.smu.edu/millimet/classes/eco7321/papers/aaronson%20et%20al.pdf>.

⁵⁷ For more on the capacity of school’s instructional leaders to evaluate teachers, see Taylor White, *Adding Eyes: The Rise, Rewards, and Risks of Multi-Rater Teacher Evaluation Systems* (Stanford: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2014), 2.

⁵⁸ For more on how states are supporting principals as instructional leaders, see Roxanne Garza, *Guiding Principals: State Efforts to Bolster Instructional Leadership* (Washington, DC: New America, 2017). For district examples of unusual leadership staffing models, see Melissa Tooley, *Frenzied to Focused: How School Staffing Models Can Support Principals as Instructional Leaders* (Washington, DC: New America, 2017).

⁵⁹ Matthew A. Kraft and Allison F. Gilmour, “Revisiting The Widget Effect: Teacher Evaluation Reforms and the Distribution of Teacher Effectiveness,” *Educational Researcher* 46, no. 5 (2017): 234–249, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft_gilmour_2017_widget_effect_er.pdf.

⁶⁰ Wisconsin reduced costs by eliminating several positions at the state department of education responsible for license renewal. For more details on the rationale and sentiment leading up to Wisconsin’s policy rescindment, see <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2017/02/12/scott-walkers-budget-would-grant-teachers-lifetime-licenses/97717306/> and <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/12/06/wisconsin-killed-license-renewal-so-why-are.html>.

⁶¹ Dina Hasiotis et. al, *The Mirage: Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest for Teacher Development* (New York: TNTF, 2015).

⁶² Madeline Will, “Even National Board Teachers Don’t Get a Pass on License Renewal,” *Education Week Teacher* (blog), last modified December 6, 2017, <https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2017/12/06/even-national-board-teachers-dont-get-a.html>.

⁶³ For insights on what research says about best practices for PD, see Melissa Tooley, “What Does High-Quality Research Say about Developing Teacher Practice?” *Education Policy* (blog), New America, March 16, 2017, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/what-does-high-quality-research-say-about-developing-teacher-practice/>.

⁶⁴ Kaylan Connally and Melissa Tooley, *Beyond Ratings: Re-envisioning State Teacher Evaluation Systems as Tools for Professional Growth* (Washington, DC: New America, 2016).

⁶⁵ Lifetime licenses should ensure there is, at minimum, a mechanism in place through which a licensing entity would be notified of any misconduct that would call into question a teacher’s fitness for service. At least one state, New Jersey, does not require teachers to undergo a background check except when they are initially hired by a local school district.

⁶⁶ Melissa Tooley, *From Frenzied to Focused: How School Staffing Models Can Support Principals as Instructional Leaders* (Washington, DC: New America, 2017).

⁶⁷ Katie Loehrke, “3 ways to motivate high performers,” *The Business Journals*, July 27, 2016, <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/human-resources/2016/07/3-ways-to-motivate-high-performers.html>.



This report carries a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, which permits re-use of New America content when proper attribution is provided. This means you are free to share and adapt New America's work, or include our content in derivative works, under the following conditions:

- **Attribution.** You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

For the full legal code of this Creative Commons license, please visit creativecommons.org.

If you have any questions about citing or reusing New America content, please visit www.newamerica.org.

All photos in this report are supplied by, and licensed to, shutterstock.com unless otherwise stated. Photos from federal government sources are used under section 105 of the Copyright Act.

