

Making Licensure Matter

August 2012



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This study was undertaken to develop recommendations for educator licensing in Colorado that will move the state toward its vision of an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school, ensuring an excellent education for the children of Colorado.

ABOUT TNTP

TNTP strives to end the injustice of educational inequality by providing excellent teachers to the students who need them most and by advancing policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom. A national nonprofit organization founded by teachers, TNTP is driven by the knowledge that effective teachers have a greater impact on student achievement than any other school factor. For more information, please visit www.tntp.org.

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THE TNTP TEAM FOR THIS STUDY

Berrick Abramson, Partner
Jim Furman, Project Director
Hai Huynh, Analyst
David Malbin

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 21st century, we have the knowledge, systems and capacity to ensure that all students in Colorado have a competent teacher. It's time to reinvent our licensure system, eliminating meaningless requirements and awarding credentials based on demonstrated professional competence.

For educators, a better system would mean doing away with unproductive, burdensome requirements for initial licensure and for renewal. Educators should not have to spend time and money accruing continuing education credits that contribute little to their teaching success.

For districts, a system with fewer barriers to entry would mean a wider variety of potential teachers. The profession of teaching faces major shortages in the coming years, and the systems now in place are not adequate to fill the gap, particularly in critical subject areas.

But above all, for students, a system focused on meaningful assessments of individual educators would provide assurance that every person involved in their education has the skills and expertise to help them achieve success in the classroom.

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Major Recommendations

Based on our discussions with teachers, administrators, representatives from institutions of higher education, a variety of professional organizations representing education professionals and our own review of leading research in the field, we make five major recommendations for reforming educator licensure in Colorado. These recommendations were developed by TNTP in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and Department of Higher Education (DHE).

These recommendations are based on a simple premise: the purpose of licensure is to ensure that every child in Colorado public schools has a teacher who meets established standards of classroom competence. These recommendations affirm the teaching competence of new entrants and current practitioners, while significantly reducing the cost and time required by educators, districts, schools and the state.

- 1) **Remove unnecessary barriers and costs.** Teachers who meet performance standards should not have to incur costs and invest time meeting meaningless requirements to renew their licenses.

- 2) **Renew educator licenses automatically based on demonstrated performance** measured using the state’s Quality Standards.
- 3) **Develop a pre-service performance assessment, in partnership with educator preparation programs, that identifies candidates likely to succeed.** Confer a full teaching license on entrants who pass the assessment. Confer a transitional license on entrants who do not demonstrate in preparation programs that they meet performance standards.
- 4) Develop a Teacher Leader License and a Transitional Principal License to **create more opportunities for educators and give school districts flexibility to meet their leadership needs.**
- 5) Clearly establish that **the purpose of licensure is to affirm the basic preparedness of new entrants and the basic competence of current practitioners.**

These guiding recommendations would translate into several specific changes in Colorado’s system of educator licensure.

Overview of Key Changes Recommended

Teacher Licenses		
Current System	Proposed System	Rationale
Four types of teacher license: Alternative License, Initial License, Professional License and Master Certificate.	Two types of teacher license: Teacher License and Transitional License	Simplify the current system to remove distinctions where they don’t represent differences in competence.
Most new teachers receive an Initial License based on program completion.	Most new teachers pass a pre-service performance assessment and receive a full professional Teacher License immediately.	Bases licensure for new teachers on individual demonstrations of competence.
All teachers renew their licenses based on “six semester hours of college/university credit or 90 clock hours of Professional Development.”	License renewal based on an individual’s record of performance measured using the state’s Quality Standards.	Bases license renewal on individual demonstrations of competence. Doesn’t force consistently effective teachers to jump through hoops.
Alternative License for participants in approved alternate route programs.	Teachers who demonstrate individual competence begin under a full Teacher License. Those who do not receive a Transitional License.	Bases licensure for new teachers on individual demonstrations of competence rather than program pathway.

Leadership Licenses		
Current System	Proposed System	Rationale
Master Certificate conveys an additional stipend to teachers who receive National Board Certification.	Teacher Leader License certifies teachers as being prepared to take on additional, recognized and compensated leadership opportunities.	Creates more career options for teachers while giving districts more options to meet today's complex leadership challenges. Teacher Leaders are only compensated when they are taking on leadership responsibilities.
There are two ways to become a principal: complete a Department of Higher Education-approved certification program or enroll in an alternate-route principal program.	Transitional Principal License adds a third way for promising leaders with relevant skills and experience.	Gives districts more options to meet today's complex leadership challenges.
License renewal based on prescribed clock hours of Professional Development or continuing education credits.	Principal license renewal based on performance, measured using Colorado's Principal Quality Standards.	Bases license renewal on individual demonstrations of competence.
Program Authorization		
Current System	Proposed System	Rationale
To make recommendations on authorizing teacher-training programs, "CDE conducts a document review ... for the eight teacher performance-based standards (TPBS) and additional endorsement standards reflected in the Colorado Educator Licensing Act."	Rather than make approval recommendations based on programs content, CDE focuses on the technical capabilities and structural context required to reliably administer a pre-service performance assessment.	Builds on DHE's work to encourage program innovation by freeing programs even more.
CDE has some ability to impose public accountability on teacher preparation programs by publishing aggregate professional performance ratings of graduates in their first three years of service.	CDE also publishes aggregate data on pre-service assessment passage rates.	Further enhances public accountability, driving program improvement while offering informative feedback to program operators.

Endorsements		
Current System	Proposed System	Rationale
Endorsements cover the grade ranges: birth to age 6 (Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education), kindergarten to grade 6 (Elementary) and grades 7 to 12 (Secondary).	Endorsements cover the grade ranges: pre-K to grade 3 (Early Childhood), grades 1 to 6 (Elementary), grades 4 to 8 (Middle Grades) and grades 6 to 12 (Secondary). K-12 licenses for some content area endorsements (e.g., Health and Physical Education).	The Middle Grades endorsement gives training programs and their teacher candidates the opportunity to focus on the needs of middle-grade students.
Special Education Generalist endorsement covers all grades.	Special Education licenses in the grade ranges: pre-K to grade 3, K to grade 8 and grades 6 to 12.	Age-range focused licenses better serve the needs of students.
Content area endorsements required for Secondary license holders in one of 14 content areas.	Content area endorsements required for Middle Grades and Secondary license holders. Content areas adjusted to reflect the Colorado Academic Standards. Candidates and programs given the option to specialize further within the Sciences and Social Sciences endorsement areas.	Allows for more specialization without additional requirements of districts or teachers.
Content area endorsements not available for Elementary license holders.	Optional content area endorsements available for Elementary license holders in Mathematics or Reading, Writing and Communicating.	Gives teachers the opportunity to focus on literacy or numeracy in the early grades.
Educators in Colorado can add new endorsements to their licenses in two ways: by acquiring 24 credit-hours of approved coursework or by passing the appropriate content area exam. Endorsement by exam is not available in all areas.	Teachers with three years of demonstrated effectiveness can add one “transitional endorsement” simply by passing the required content area exams. Transitional endorsements would become permanent based on demonstrated performance in the new content area.	Gives effective teachers greater opportunity to meet school and school district needs and to pursue their own professional goals.

Changes to Teacher Licensing

We recommend a dramatic simplification of the current licensure system that would recognize the high levels of professional skill required to be a successful teacher in Colorado and strike a balance between protecting students and broadening career opportunities in education. Effective teachers would no longer be forced to jump through hoops to renew their licenses, saving them considerable time and money. New entrants to the profession would gain distinction by individually demonstrating their readiness for a professional Teacher License. Those who enter with the endorsement of a school district, but have not yet demonstrated effectiveness, would be monitored closely in their first few years under a Transitional License. This paper recommends a set of criteria for managing the issue and renewal of each of these license types.

Teacher Licenses would be issued and renewed based on Colorado's definitions of effectiveness, reflecting the hard work that the state has done in the past two years to articulate standards of performance for educators. We recommend making license renewal dependent on teachers' ability to meet the educator Quality Standards outlined in Senate Bill 10-191, the state's educator effectiveness law. Teachers would hold a Teacher License valid for three years initially, and automatically renew every five years thereafter if the teacher was consistently meeting the Quality Standards. This approach would free teachers from the obligation to collect continuing education credits while reassuring districts, parents and students that every licensed teacher has a demonstrated record of success.

Initial licensure would distinguish which candidates are likely to be successful in the profession. The current system sorts new teachers into licenses and authorizations based on the type of preparation program they attended, yet recent literature finds that regulating in this way contributes little to improving the teacher workforce. We recommend that Colorado join a growing consortium of states using performance assessments to measure each candidate's teaching skills in a pre-service classroom setting. We have identified eight elements of the Quality Standards for Teachers that are particularly important to new teachers' success or failure in their first few years. We would expect that most new teachers would enter the profession by passing this pre-service assessment, beginning their teaching careers in Colorado with a full Teacher License. Districts would know that a new teacher with a Teacher License had shown professional competence in a classroom setting.

The remaining new teachers would be monitored closely in their first few years under a Transitional License. These would include graduates of programs that do not offer the assessment or practice teaching experiences, career changers with content expertise or professional experiences who are selected by a district, candidates that do not pass the assessment and out-of-state license holders without a record of experience. To maintain high standards for students, all Transitional License holders would be monitored more closely and have to demonstrate their effectiveness to renew their licenses annually, but any Transitional License holder could advance to a Teacher License after his or her second year by meeting the Quality Standards of S.B. 10-191. The Transitional License would allow districts more flexibility to hire professionals with experiences and content expertise that meet their hiring needs, and once Transitional License holders had established a record of effective performance, they would continue their careers under a full Teacher License.

Changes to Leadership Licensing

School leadership is growing ever more demanding, and school districts need the flexibility to structure school leadership teams to meet these challenges. Colorado's schools vary tremendously in size and complexity, and no single leadership structure will be universally successful. We recommend two new ways for schools to respond to the changing demands of school leadership.

First, teachers' mid-level leadership roles should be recognized and rewarded with a Teacher Leader License. Establishing a career ladder would help retain great teachers by recognizing their contributions and allowing them to extend their influence without pushing them from the classroom. A license for teacher leaders would also give school districts new ways to structure school leadership and manage district functions that require instructional expertise.

Second, we recommend adding a new path to school leadership that reflects the variety of skills now required to be a successful "principal" by creating a Transitional Principal License. The Transitional Principal License would give school districts the freedom to hire experienced leaders, executives and managers from other fields to become principals, under short-term licenses and with the direct mentorship of established principals.

Fostering Program Innovation and Public Accountability

These changes, taken together, would foster ever greater innovation among educator training programs. The Department of Higher Education (DHE) is already doing strong work to encourage such innovation, but fundamentally it must still monitor programs to make sure they deliver courses that meet the requirements set down by the State Board of Education. If the state could use a pre-service assessment to evaluate each teacher candidate's readiness, educator training programs will be more likely to experiment with different models of teacher preparation, including residencies or apprenticeships, blended learning models or other innovations.

To complement this freedom, we recommend that the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) publish aggregate data on educator programs' pre-service assessment results. Combined with the aggregate data CDE already plans to publish on graduates' professional performance ratings over their first three years, this would create a powerful feedback loop for teacher preparation programs to adjust and improve their programs. Trends in how well prepared graduates are as they enter the profession and how well they perform in their early teaching careers would be valuable to school districts, school leaders, potential teacher trainees and DHE.

Changes to Endorsements

“Endorsements” describe the areas of content an instructor is allowed to teach under his or her license. We offer a series of specific recommendations to better align the existing system of endorsements with the Colorado Academic Standards and the Teacher Quality Standards. These include adding a Middle Grades license; breaking down Special Education licenses into three grade spans; adding optional content area endorsements for holders of Elementary licenses; and changing the content area endorsements for holders of Middle Grades and Secondary licenses to better reflect the Colorado Academic Standards.

We also recommend a process to make it easier for teachers who are effective in their primary content areas to add new endorsements, giving consistently effective teachers new opportunities to meet school and district needs and to pursue their own professional goals.

INTRODUCTION

The Moment

Over the last few years, Colorado has pioneered many new policies designed to make sure all students have access to effective teaching supported by strong school leadership. Those policies have become models for state legislators and education reformers nationwide, earning Colorado acclaim for its high standards and reasoned approach to reform. The best-known recent policy change has been the state's new educator evaluation system, but that reform is only one part of a broader effort that includes revised academic standards, assessments and expanded learning opportunities for all students – all anchored in accountability and continuous improvement. Colorado now has a chance to support these initiatives by introducing a new approach to educator licensure that is aligned with the knowledge and skills defined by the Quality Standards adopted by the State Board of Education following the passage of Senate Bill 10-191.

Colorado has already begun to reimagine education as an elite profession capable of attracting the best and the brightest. It is time to reinvent licensure in service of that vision.

In other professions, a license provides assurance that its holder has demonstrated particular knowledge or specialized skills. Training programs have flexibility in how they structure preparation so long as graduates demonstrate their professional skills. Programs whose graduates succeed gain special prestige. Colorado has already begun to reimagine education as an elite profession capable of attracting the best and the brightest. It is time to reinvent licensure in service of that vision, recognizing the great advances in education research of the past decade and Colorado's groundbreaking legislative record.

The Problem

Colorado's present system of initial teaching licenses regulates the courses a teacher trainee must take and the amount of time he or she must spend in them. As set out in the Rules for the Administration of the Educator Licensing Act of 1991, the state assesses candidates' content knowledge through a standardized exam that requires, in most cases, a relatively low passing score. Current legislation prevents CDE from requiring any additional exams. To verify that prospective teachers have the requisite pedagogical knowledge and an opportunity to practice their skills, the state relies on institutional recommendations from their teacher training programs. In practice, these recommendations merely certify the content of the program, not the individual teachers' own knowledge or skills.

This is like issuing a Clinical Social Worker license (LCSW) to anyone who has completed classroom requirements but not been observed working in a clinical setting or issuing a pilot's license to anyone who attends flight school without assessing their abilities flying a plane. By failing to assess each individual's competence through clinical time or a flight test, such a system would endanger the public. Licensing educators without adequately assessing their individual competence is equally risky for Colorado's public interest.

Sitting through classes in a social work program and passing written exams does not assure the public an LCSW has the skills to work effectively with patients nor does logging prescribed practice hours in an aircraft guarantee a student has the ability to respond appropriately to an engine stall or safely land a plane in a crosswind. Similarly, prescribed coursework and practice hours in a teacher training program are not guarantees that all graduates are ready to teach. In the past twenty years, compelling research has emerged establishing meaningful measures of teacher effectiveness and comparing various licensure requirements to these measures.

“As a former educator, current family leadership volunteer and a parent with a child who happens to have a disability, it is very important for ‘the education world’ to understand the impact that a license and teacher education program have on the art of teaching.”

Ultimately, this research shows that there is not a meaningful relationship between licensure requirements like pedagogical coursework and test scores and these new measures of teacher performance. In short, participation in an approved program does not predict effective teaching.¹

“As a former educator, current family leadership volunteer and a parent with a child who happens to have a disability,” one parent told us, “it is very important for ‘the education world’ to understand the impact that a license and teacher education program have on the art of teaching. In my beliefs, a person can be knowledgeable about the principles of students as individual learners, but not know how to apply or use that knowledge.”

Evidence from Louisiana shows that different programs meeting the same standards for state approval produce teachers who succeed at varying rates.² Using similar research models, research into Missouri programs found that variation among graduates of the same programs was far greater than the variation between approved programs.³ Participation in an accredited program, even a highly regarded one, is not a guarantee of competence, or even a very good predictor of competence compared to other entrants. The natural conclusion is that we should license educators based on their individual readiness, rather than program status or content.

License renewal is handled the same way: teachers are asked to accrue standardized inputs (e.g., continuing education credits) rather than demonstrate competent teaching. That made sense 100 years ago when today’s systems of licensure were first put into practice, because states were just beginning to require a high school diploma to teach.⁴ Normal schools were beginning to replace high schools as the professional preparation for teachers. As of 1921, several states required high school completion, but “30 states had still no definite prior schooling requirement for the initial certificate.”⁵ In this context, continuing education

¹ Gordon, R., Kane, T.J., & Staiger, O.S. (2006). *Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2006/04/education-gordon>.

² Gansle, K.A., Burns, J.M., & Noell, G. (2010). Value added assessment of teacher preparation in Louisiana: 2005-2006 to 2008-2009, Overview of performance bands. Baton Rouge, LA: The Louisiana Board of Regents. Retrieved from <http://regents.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/TeacherPreparation/200910ValueAddedAssessmentOverviewofPerformanceBandsFINAL82610.pdf>.

³ Koedel, C., Parsons, E., Podgursky, M., & Ehlert, M. (2012). Teacher preparation programs and teacher quality: Are there real differences across programs? Retrieved from http://economics.missouri.edu/working-papers/2012/WP1204_koedel_et_al.pdf.

⁴ La Bue, A.C. (1960). Teacher certification in the United States: A brief history. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 11, 147-172.

⁵ Angus, D.L. (2001). Professionalism and the Public Good: A Brief History of Teacher Certification. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 449149)

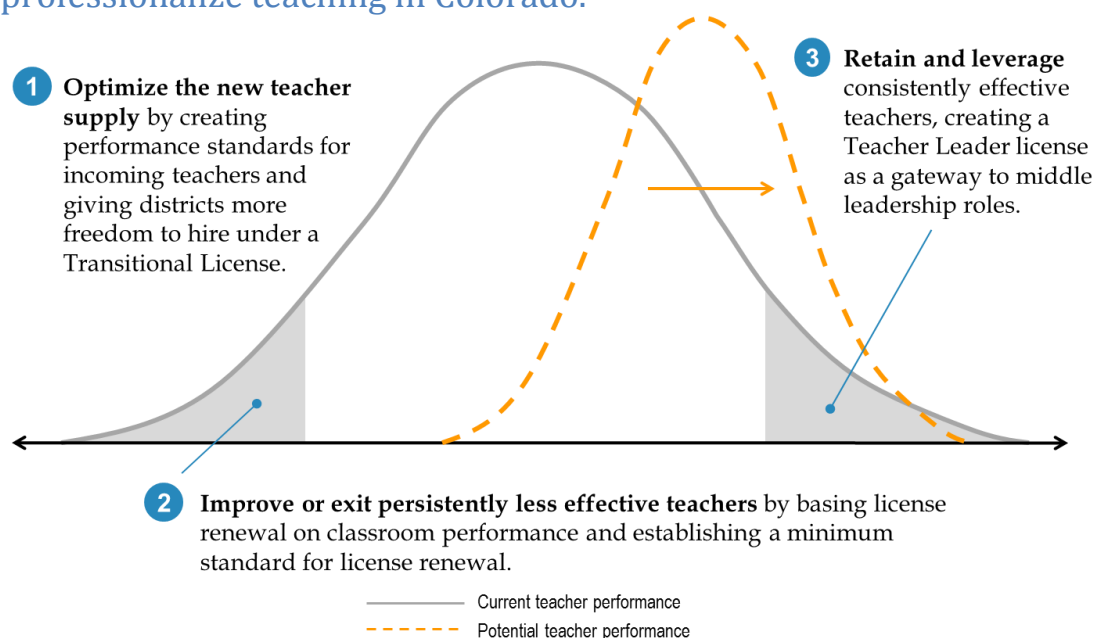
requirements were meant to keep teachers a few steps ahead of their students. But today Colorado requires all teachers to have a bachelor's degree and a specific concentration of 24 credits of college content in order to qualify to teach a subject.⁶

The Costs

The present system imposes requirements on educators that bear no relationship to their success, resulting in real costs to the state and to participants. CDE employs 27 people to review the evidence of each of the 30,000 teachers who apply for new and renewal licenses in Colorado each year. In a tenth of these cases, a license cannot be granted because of an incorrect application that must be resubmitted. This process costs Colorado educators about \$2 million in application fees and does little to ensure their competence or improve the education of students.⁷ Some fees could be reduced if the renewal process were made automatic for educators who are consistently effective.

Unproductive requirements also erect barriers to entry for new teachers at a time when the profession desperately needs new recruits. Half the teachers in the United States are poised to retire within the next 10 years.⁸ Current systems are not adequate to replace all those teachers, especially in shortage areas like science, math and special education. An unstable job market in many sectors has left more professionals in those shortage areas available to teach than ever before, which means that pulling down those barriers now could yield big rewards for Colorado schools.

Figure 1: A new licensing system can support several key levers to improve and professionalize teaching in Colorado.



⁶ Colorado Department of Education. (2010). *Handbook for Districts: Highly Qualified Teachers in Colorado*. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved July 9, 2012 from http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/dl/tii_a_hqt_cohqhandbook.pdf.

⁷ Colorado Department of Education, Educator Licensing and Financial Data provided to TNTF.

⁸ Auguste, B., Kihn, P., & Miller, M. (2010). Closing the talent gap: *Attracting and retaining top-third graduates to a career in teaching*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from <http://mckinseysociety.com/closing-the-talent-gap/>.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES AND MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATOR LICENSURE IN COLORADO

Unproductive and non-predictive licensing requirements create barriers to entry.

Currently licensure is a cumbersome exercise, complicated and costly for the state, the school district and the individual seeking a license. Some of that burden is justifiable: it is important to guarantee student safety, and it is desirable to ensure that a person who holds a license to teach is capable of doing the job. Unfortunately, many of the requirements now in place for obtaining and renewing licenses bear little or no relationship to educators' ability to do their jobs.

CDE should move aggressively to eliminate those licensure requirements that do not protect students or reflect individual educator competence.

Recommendation 1

Remove unnecessary barriers and costs for educators and state agencies.

Educator license renewal should be based on Colorado's established definitions of effectiveness.

Today, in order to renew a professional license, teachers must prove that they have been present for specific classes or professional development activities. The statutes prescribe that teachers must have completed "six semester hours of college/university credit or 90 clock hours of Professional Development."⁹ The specific rules governing these requirements are precise and consistent for every teacher across the state. But this is the wrong way to focus on consistency: there is no definition of the knowledge or skills to be acquired, how they might be demonstrated or how they should influence professional practice.

Research has consistently shown that a record of past performance is, by far, the greatest predictor of future outcomes. Licensure should reflect this type of consistency: a single threshold of classroom effectiveness assessed in a consistent way. Teachers who have established a record of effectiveness should not have to jump through hoops and spend money to renew their licenses.

In the past two years, Colorado has done groundbreaking work to define effective teaching and student achievement in the 21st century. The state will soon have the ability to assess meaningfully each teacher's impact on student learning, which is the real evidence of successful, ongoing professional

Recommendation 2

Base license renewal decisions on an individual's record of performance measured using the state's Quality Standards.

⁹ *Renewal of a Colorado Professional License*. Web. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved June 22, 2012 from http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/Licensure_renewal_info.asp.

development. With these measures in place, the state should stop requiring uniform evidence of professional development or credit hours for consistently effective teachers.

The standard path to licensure for new teachers should confirm that they are likely to be successful in the profession.

Until now, Colorado has managed standards for pre-service licensure by approving coursework delivered through certification programs and by defining passing results on content knowledge exams. It has in place a complex system of licenses and authorizations to cover various types of educator preparation. Yet there is no evidence that these requirements confer different licenses on teachers who are likely to be more or less effective in the classroom.

We know that there are huge differences among teachers' performance in their first year, but we also know that those differences are not meaningfully related to the pathway teachers took to the profession. Whether they pass through a traditional certification program or take an alternate route to the classroom, some teachers simply come into their first classroom assignment performing better than others.¹⁰ Moreover, we know that those that perform better out of the gate will probably continue to perform better.¹¹

Rather than focusing on course titles, duration and experiences, Colorado should devise a system to identify which new teachers are likely to perform competently. Those who demonstrate that they are likely to become effective should be given a full Teacher License. All others should be monitored closely in their first few years under a Transitional License.

Meaningful statewide evaluations of educator effectiveness will be in place by the 2013–2014 school year for all teachers. For the first time, Colorado will have a differentiated record of teacher effectiveness that reflects teachers' professional practice and impact on students' academic growth as defined by the Quality Standards. Colorado should seize the opportunity to develop a pre-service performance assessment that identifies candidates who are likely to succeed.

A system that differentiates between new teachers who had demonstrated promise and proven a basic level of competence would also convey valuable information to school districts as they made hiring decisions. Colorado could also use the data generated by this system to fuel innovation and public accountability in pre-service teacher preparation programs.

Recommendation 3

Develop a pre-service performance assessment that identifies candidates likely to succeed. Confer a full Teacher License on entrants who pass the assessment, and a Transitional License on other entrants.

¹⁰ Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2008). Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement. *NBER Working Paper No. 14314*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14314>.

¹¹ Gordon, R., Kane, T.J., & Staiger, O.S. (2006). *Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2006/04/education-gordon>.

School leadership is growing ever more complex, and school districts need the flexibility to address that growing complexity.

School leadership was once a relatively simple affair: a single school principal who had once been a teacher and now acted essentially as a head teacher. Today schools place much greater demands on their leaders: principals and other administrators have to devote more time to their roles as personnel managers, Chief Operating Officers, compliance officers and accountants. School districts may divide these responsibilities across a variety of job titles depending on the size and complexity of their schools.

Districts concentrating executive leadership responsibilities under the title of principal may want to expand their search beyond the ranks of teachers to find leaders to meet those demands. Such leadership structures also open the door to “teacher leader” roles that require instructional expertise. Teachers can assume roles that contribute to the quality of instruction across their school or district without pursuing the executive functions of the principal. Teacher leaders might contribute to school and district leadership teams by coaching, mentoring and evaluating their peers, or by developing student curricula, assessments and additional supports.

Now that Colorado has codified statewide quality standards, the state has the opportunity to create a Teacher Leader License granted based on an individual teacher’s track record of classroom performance and demonstrated leadership. The fundamental idea of a Teacher Leader License would be that school districts could choose to give certain teachers the opportunity to take on additional, recognized and compensated leadership opportunities. This would help school districts identify those teachers who are ready to take on leadership roles while creating a career ladder for teachers that would allow them to advance while continuing to teach.

Recognizing and empowering these instructional leaders could also leave districts more freedom to employ non-academic leaders to fill other executive roles. The state should create a system that gives school districts freedom to structure school leadership to fit their schools’ diverse organizational needs.

Recommendation 4

Develop a Teacher

Leader License and a

Transitional Principal

License to create more

opportunities for

educators and give

school districts

flexibility to meet their

leadership needs.

The purpose of licensure should be clearly articulated in statute.

While we have alluded to many of the shortcomings of the current system, the existing licensure process is accomplishing the closest thing it has to a stated purpose in Colorado. There is no explicit statement defining the purpose of licensing in the Educator Licensing Act of 1991, but it is strongly implied that the main role of licensing is to bar educators who engage in “unlawful” or “unethical” behavior.

Ensuring student safety is an important minimum standard that licensure should continue to uphold. But it can and should accomplish more than that. Licensure is a classic function of the state, especially with regards to professions like medicine — or teaching — that have a critical effect on the well-being and prosperity of citizens. The public’s knowledge that this is the case makes them much more comfortable in dealing with professionals whose qualifications they are not equipped to assess. To protect the public, we set a bar to ensure that all our doctors, nurses and engineers are competent, and we should do the same with teachers.

Colorado law should make a similarly clear statement that teacher licensure and credentials are intended to assure the basic preparedness of new entrants and the competence of current practitioners. In the past two decades, research has consistently affirmed the importance of each individual teacher’s impact on students’ educational and life trajectories. Since 2010, Colorado has articulated standards to evaluate educator effectiveness and codified these definitions into law. The state should expand the stated purpose of and function of licensure to reinforce these initiatives.

Recommendation 5

Clearly establish that the purpose of licensure is to affirm the basic preparedness of new entrants and the competence of current practitioners.

A NEW WAY TO LICENSE TEACHERS

The following is a model for how Colorado can act on the principles and guiding recommendations described above, based on our discussions with teachers, administrators, representatives from institutions of higher education, a variety of professional organizations representing education professionals and our own review of leading research in the field.

We envision two major changes to the current process for licensing teachers.

First, in accordance with Recommendation 2 above, we recommend making license renewal dependent on teachers' ability to meet the Quality Standards outlined in S.B. 10-191. Renewal should be automatic for teachers who consistently demonstrate effectiveness by meeting those standards.

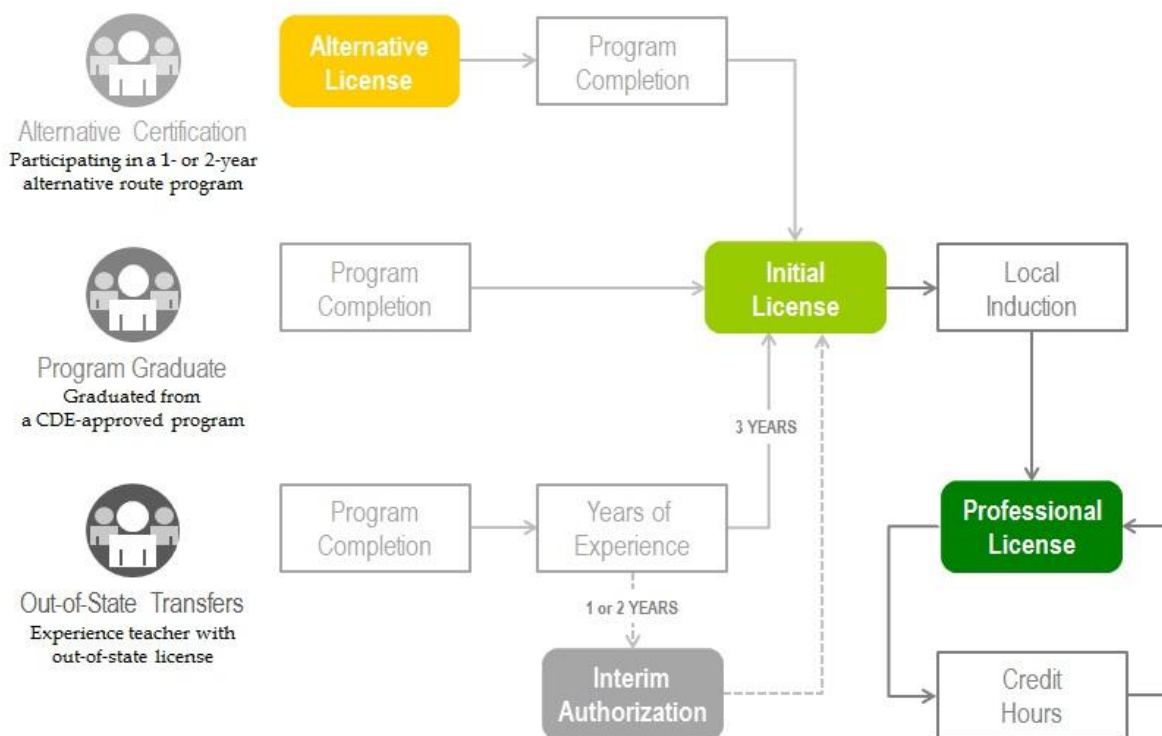
Second, in accordance with Recommendation 3, we recommend piloting and adopting a pre-service performance assessment that measures an individual candidate's teaching skills in a pre-service setting. That performance assessment would be based on the Quality Standards described by S.B. 10-191. Results would give school districts meaningful information about how ready candidates are for the classroom and how likely they are to be effective down the road. Once adopted, this assessment would allow Colorado to confer Teacher Licenses on candidates whose performance on the task demonstrates readiness.

In addition, in accordance with Recommendation 1, we propose several changes to teacher licensure that would remove unnecessary barriers and costs and provide more flexibility to teachers and school districts.

The Current Licensure System

We have already discussed many of the problems with the current system of licensure, but before we offer our specific recommendations to address those problems, it is worth taking a moment to describe how the system works now (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: How Licensure Works Now



There are at present four main types of teacher licenses: the Alternative License, the Initial License, the Professional License and the Master Certificate, as well as several authorizations and endorsements. (An “endorsement” describes the specific areas an instructor is allowed to teach under his or her existing license.)

- The **Alternative License** is intended only for participants in approved Alternate Route programs, and lasts the duration of the Alternate Route program.
- The **Initial License** is the first license held by all teachers upon completion of an approved teacher preparation program, an Alternate Route program or a Teacher in Residence program. It is also the first license held in Colorado by all teachers with valid out-of-state licenses who have taught for less than three years. It lasts for three years and can be renewed once. The Initial License converts to a Professional License when the license holder completes a state-approved local induction program.
- The **Professional License** is the basic license currently held by all mid-career teachers. A teacher obtains one for the first time by submitting a valid Initial License and evidence of having completed an approved induction program. It lasts for five years, and can be renewed based on an application that provides evidence of continuing professional development hours or credits.

- The **Master Certificate** extends the Professional License by two additional years to seven years. It is awarded to teachers who receive National Board for Professional Teaching Certification or demonstrate professional excellence through a portfolio review.
- An additional layer of authorizations has accrued over the years on top of these main teacher licenses in Colorado to account for the needs of school districts and potential teachers who do not meet the specific requirements for preparation outlined by one of the licenses above. These authorizations include: Temporary Teacher Eligibility, for out-of-state teachers who have not yet met the requirements for Initial Licensure; Teacher in Residence authorization for teachers participating in residency programs; and Adjunct Instructor authorization for specialists in content areas that lack approved preparation programs.

We suggest that Colorado replace the current array of licenses with a single professional license, the Teacher License, for all teachers who have demonstrated professional performance. A second license, the Transitional License, would be available to all other qualified candidates, offering a closely monitored opportunity to demonstrate that professional level of performance.

Major Change #1: Renewing a Teacher License

Under this model, the assumptions CDE currently makes about all teachers participating in a particular class of experience would be replaced with a measure of individuals' actual performance in the classroom. Most teachers would hold a Teacher License, replacing the current system's Professional License. It would be valid for three years initially, and automatically renew every five years thereafter if the teacher is consistently effective in meeting the state's educator Quality Standards.

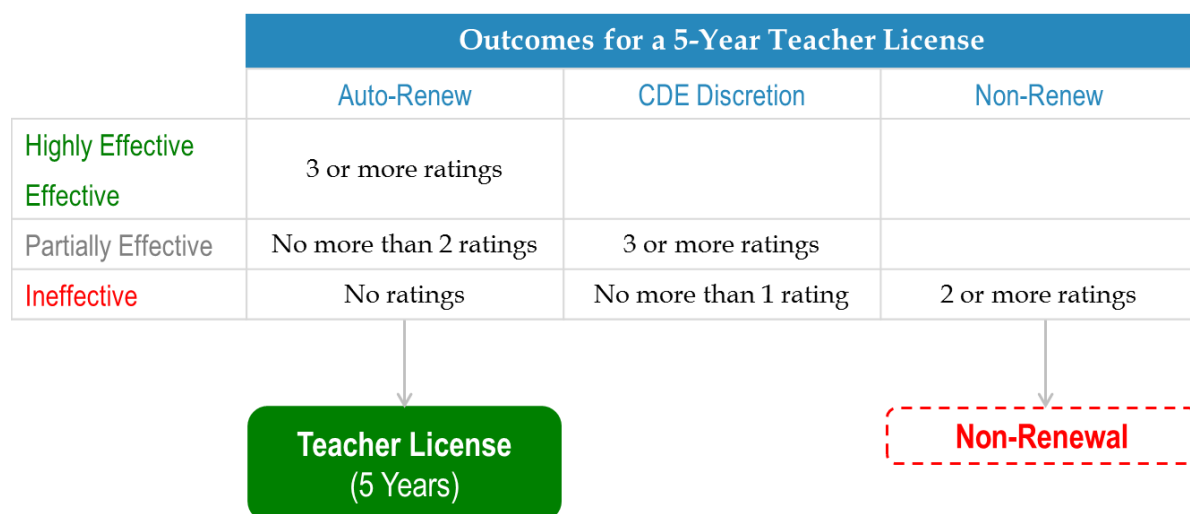
Figure 3: Renewal of a Three-Year Teacher License



At the three-year mark, we recommend that CDE automatically renew the licenses of teachers who demonstrate that they are consistently effective, that is, teachers with two ratings of Effective or better, and no ratings of Ineffective. This would save those teachers the time and money of accruing credits and assembling an application for renewal, and save the CDE the effort and paperwork required for review. We recommend that CDE not renew the licenses of teachers who demonstrate that they are consistently ineffective: those with two or three ratings of Ineffective in the preceding three years. Teachers that fall between these two prescribed thresholds could apply to renew their licenses at CDE’s discretion (see figure 3).

For renewals every five years thereafter, we recommend that CDE automatically renew the licenses of teachers with at least three ratings of Effective or higher, and no ratings of Ineffective. We recommend that CDE not renew the licenses of teachers with two or more ratings of Ineffective in the preceding five years. Just as at the three-year mark, teachers that fall between these two prescribed thresholds could apply to renew their licenses at CDE’s discretion (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Renewal of a Five-Year Teacher License



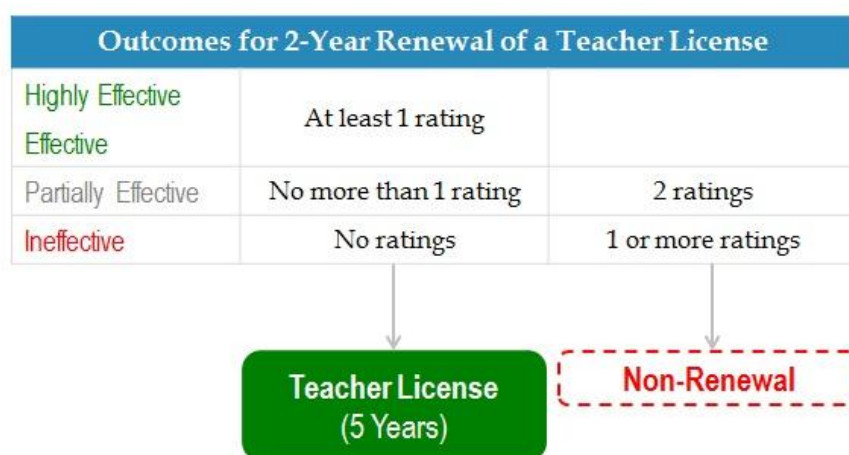
Among other benefits, this would allow CDE to focus its resources for case review and individual judgment on the small subset of teachers that falls between the automatic thresholds. (At the three-year mark, that would mean two or three ratings of Partially Effective with no more than one Ineffective rating; at the five-year mark, three or more ratings of Partially Effective with no more than one Ineffective rating.) It would concentrate the expertise and judgment of CDE staff onto borderline cases, and give them the chance to consider additional information not included in the performance record.

A teacher who did not qualify for automatic renewal would submit an application to CDE with the support of his or her school district. This application would include a targeted plan for additional support and professional development, which might prescribe a specific set of courses, professional development experiences or mentorships that related to the teacher’s

teaching context and individual needs. The application for renewal would be reviewed by an individual at CDE with the ability to consider performance evidence and context not reflected in the teacher's performance record.

When such an application is approved, we recommend that CDE establish a two-year renewal period for these Teacher Licenses to give the teacher an opportunity to reestablish a record of effective performance. Teachers who received at least one rating of Effective or better over those two years, with no ratings of Ineffective, would receive a five-year Teacher License. We recommend that CDE not renew the licenses of those who received one Ineffective or two Partially Effective ratings over those two years (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Teacher License Renewal at CDE's Discretion



Major Change #2: Obtaining a Teacher License Immediately Through a Pre-Service Assessment

Under the system we propose, the great majority of teacher-training program graduates would obtain Teacher Licenses immediately by passing a new pre-service performance assessment for teacher trainees — the Colorado Pre-service Performance Assessment for Teachers (COPPAT). This would be a significant departure from the 20th-century approach of licensing teachers based on the contents of their preparation program. A COPPAT would give each teacher the chance to demonstrate readiness for a Teacher License. This opportunity would be open to anyone participating in a program approved by CDE to offer the COPPAT, but the assessment would be of the individual, not the program. (The minority of new teachers who do not enter the profession by passing the assessment would begin teaching under a Transitional License, discussed below.)

To obtain a Teacher License as a new teacher a candidate would need:

- A passing score from an institution authorized to administer the COPPAT
- A background check
- A bachelor's degree and evidence of having met relevant coursework requirements
- A passing score on applicable content and pedagogical exams

A teacher who had shown success in another state could obtain a Teacher License with:

- A background check in Colorado
- A valid out-of-state license
- Two years of full-time teaching experience with a rating of Effective, Highly Effective or the equivalent on his or her most recent professional evaluation
- Passing scores on the applicable content exams. Previous passing scores could transfer.

Out-of-state teachers continuing their careers in Colorado under a Teacher License would still participate in local induction. An out-of-state teacher who did not fulfill these requirements could obtain a Transitional License, described in more detail below.

The Colorado Pre-service Performance Assessment for Teachers (COPPAT)

The COPPAT introduced above is meant to direct teachers into one of two categories based on an individual demonstration of knowledge and skills. Teacher candidates would have to teach a class of students in a practicum setting and be assessed on how well they plan lessons, teach those lessons and assess their students' progress.

The COPPAT would function somewhat like the Advanced Placement exams taken by high school students. AP exams test whether students can demonstrate mastery of material equivalent to an introductory-level college course. If they demonstrate that they have — by achieving an acceptable score on the test — most colleges will grant them credit and allow them to take 200-level courses in that subject area. But students who do not pass the test are not barred from college, and once they become college freshmen they have another opportunity to learn that introductory-level material and demonstrate mastery.

Similarly, a passing score on the COPPAT would show that a candidate can demonstrate sufficient teaching proficiency to pass directly to a three-year Teacher License. But candidates who did not pass the COPPAT would still be given an opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness under a Transitional License with more oversight and monitoring.

It is important to draw a distinction here, however: AP exams assess knowledge, which is reasonably context-independent. The COPPAT would assess performance, which does depend on context. Performing for the COPPAT in a student-teacher practicum environment is not the same as performing in one's own classroom with far less support. It is also simply not practical to assess many of the Quality Standards in a pre-service setting. CDE will therefore have to make sure that the COPPAT it adopts does reliably predict early-career performance.

At the start of the pilot period, CDE would identify partners to help it establish what skills and knowledge can reliably be assessed in a practicum teaching context and which are most likely to predict early-career performance. We suggest that these be drawn from the elements of the Teacher Quality Standards. We will recommend eight elements to include in the pilot COPPAT in a section below.

As will all Colorado teachers, the pilot participants would be evaluated using the Quality Standards of S.B. 10-191 each of their first years in the classroom. Using the unique identifiers established for each pre-service teacher in Colorado, CDE will be able to link each teacher's pilot COPPAT scores to his or her evaluation ratings. That will help demonstrate how well the COPPAT scores predict early-career performance. Some elements of the COPPAT would emerge as more predictive than others, and the system should be expected to evolve through the pilot period.

Based on those findings, CDE could then define passing scores, based on the likelihood that teachers above the proposed cut-point will demonstrate acceptable performance in their first three years. CDE does not need to exclude participants from teaching who have a lower than passing score, but should direct them to a Transitional License with more oversight and monitoring.

Once the predictive power of the COPPAT score is established, CDE may also define a minimum non-passing score. If scores below a certain threshold indicate enough risk that a teacher will be ineffective, CDE could preclude those entrants from receiving a Transitional License.

We outline a timeline below by which CDE could pilot and validate a COPPAT before adopting and endorsing the system for general use. Colorado may wish to test multiple versions of a COPPAT in parallel, or give institutes of higher education the option to pilot-test adjustments to a primary model. After the pilot period, CDE should adopt a single version of the COPPAT. Potential teachers applying for a Teacher License should encounter a single, consistent assessment statewide.

Transitional Licenses

While new teachers who can demonstrate their basic readiness on the COPPAT would receive a Teacher License immediately, the minority of teachers that do not enter the profession this way should be monitored closely in their first few years under a Transitional License. These would include graduates of programs that do not offer the COPPAT or do not include practice teaching experiences, individuals with content expertise or professional experiences who are selected by a district but have not completed a formal teacher training program or participated in the COPPAT, candidates that do not pass the COPPAT assessment and out-of-state license holders with an insufficient track record of effective performance and success. The Transitional License would replace the existing Alternative License and Initial License and several authorizations.

Transitional Licenses would significantly widen the gate for potential applicants, allowing school districts the flexibility to hire the staff they need. They would also give new teachers time to establish a record of performance, since evidence shows that most teachers improve rapidly at the start of their careers.¹² But they would simultaneously protect the public interest and Colorado’s children by holding new teachers to a minimum standard of performance each year, and by requiring teachers to demonstrate effectiveness with the districts that select them before they progress to Teacher Licenses. Individual school districts would have to support and develop teachers they hire under Transitional Licenses, but full Teacher Licenses are portable within the state, and even reciprocally recognized by other states. Colorado has an even greater interest in monitoring the issue of Teacher Licenses to protect the public interest in other school districts.

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A Transitional License would require:

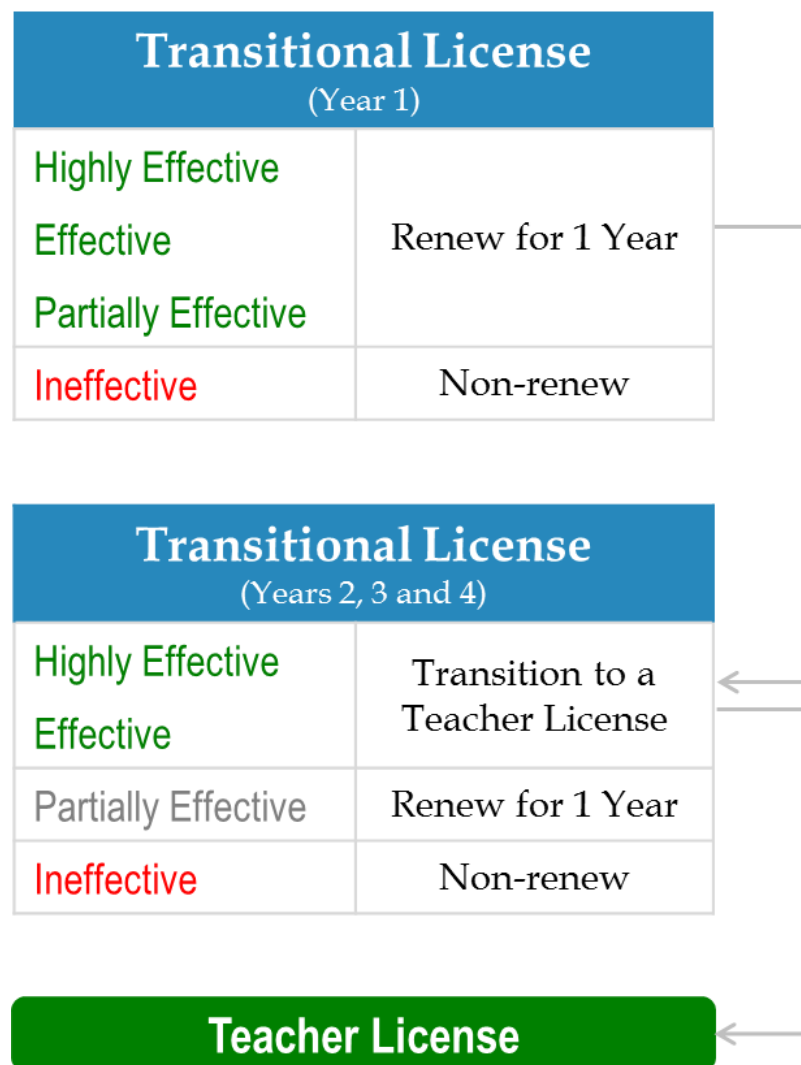
- A background check
- A bachelor’s degree with relevant coursework by content area
- A passing score on content-area and pedagogical exams
- An offer of employment from a school district as a result of an established and rigorous teacher selection process

One risk of such a system is that a district might hire a new teacher in June for the coming year, only to discover that that person was unable to pass one of the other three requirements and thus could not receive a Transitional License. To guard against that possibility, CDE could “pre-qualify” candidates by certifying that they had submitted evidence of a background check and transcripts, and received passing scores on the necessary exams. An offer of employment would then satisfy the final requirement, and CDE would issue a Transitional License.

The Transitional License would be valid for one year and could be renewed three times. It would have to be renewed at least once — that is, new teachers would have to hold a Transitional License for a total of at least two years. To be renewed, the license holder would have to achieve a rating of Partially Effective or higher. A Transitional License holder could advance to a Teacher License after his or her second year with a rating of Effective or higher (see figure 6).

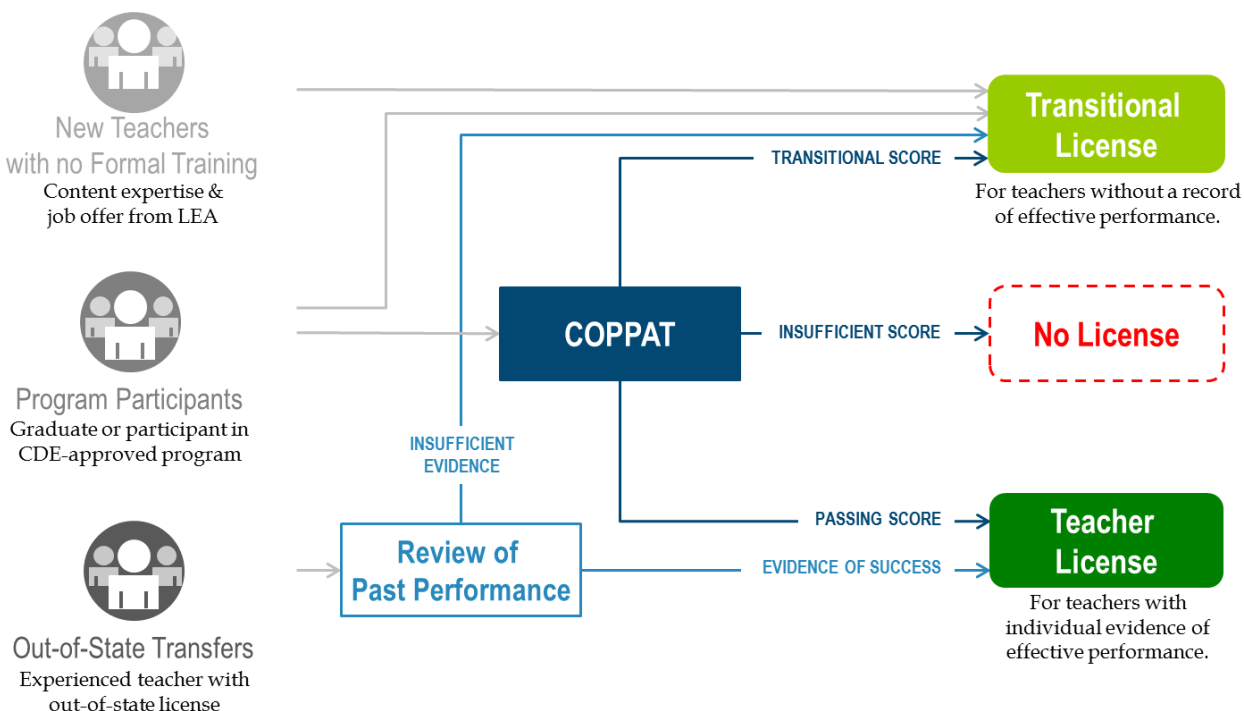
¹² Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A. and Kain, J. F. (2005). Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement. *Econometrica*, 73, 417-458.

Figure 6: Transitional License Renewal



We recommend that under certain circumstances and with CDE approval, a teacher unable to renew a Transitional License because of an Ineffective rating be allowed to begin teaching again in another context, if another district wants to hire him or her. Different schools and contexts may work for different novice teachers, and a novice teacher who cannot demonstrate success in his or her first year should not be shut out of the profession entirely. However, to protect children, the issuance of a Transitional License after receipt of an Ineffective rating should be carefully reviewed by CDE, contingent upon a letter of support from the hiring principal, the certification by the hiring school that a professional development plan will be implemented and consideration by CDE of any other relevant support being provided, such as mentoring by an effective teacher. Finally, reentry under a Transitional License in such a scenario would be limited to a one-time event, after which the applicant would be required to complete an approved preparation program and pursue a Teacher License by meeting the applicable requirements.

Figure 7: How the New System Would Work



Changes to Testing Requirements

Currently, to obtain an initial license in Colorado teachers need to pass exams such as PLACE or Praxis II that test their content knowledge in the relevant endorsement areas. We propose updating that requirement for some new licensees.

In some endorsement areas, new exams are available that test content knowledge specifically for teaching purposes. Tests such as “Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching” (MKT), developed at the University of Michigan, assess specific content knowledge required for successful math instruction alongside the general content knowledge required on most standard content-area exams such as the Praxis II.¹³ We recommend updating testing requirements to replace general content knowledge exams with newer content for teaching exams where there is credible and substantial research supporting their ability to predict teacher performance.

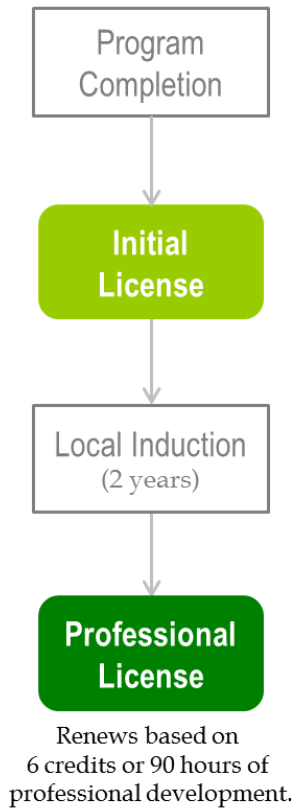
See *Appendix A* for a complete list of all exams recommended for various endorsement areas.

¹³ Hill, H.C., Rowan, B., & Ball, D.L. (2005). Effects of Teachers' Mathematical Knowledge for Teaching on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42, 371-406.

Figure 8: Case Study, Teacher Entering through Traditional Prep Program

Current CO Licenses

2 years for all candidates



Proposed CO Licenses

0 – 4 years based on performance

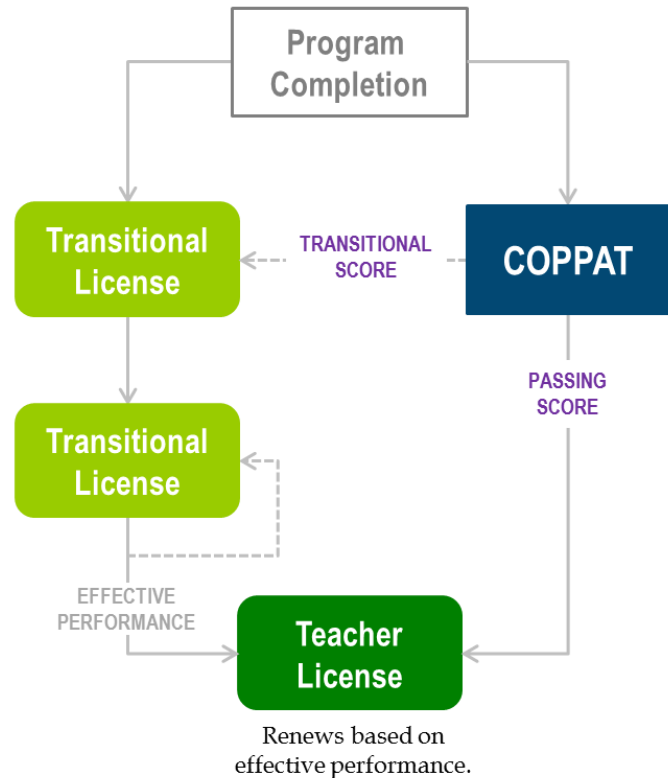
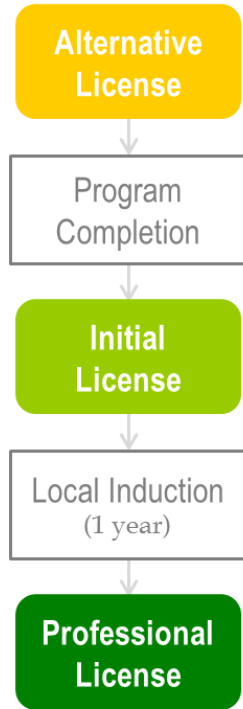


Figure 9: Case Study, Teacher Entering through an “Alt-Route” Program

Current CO Licenses

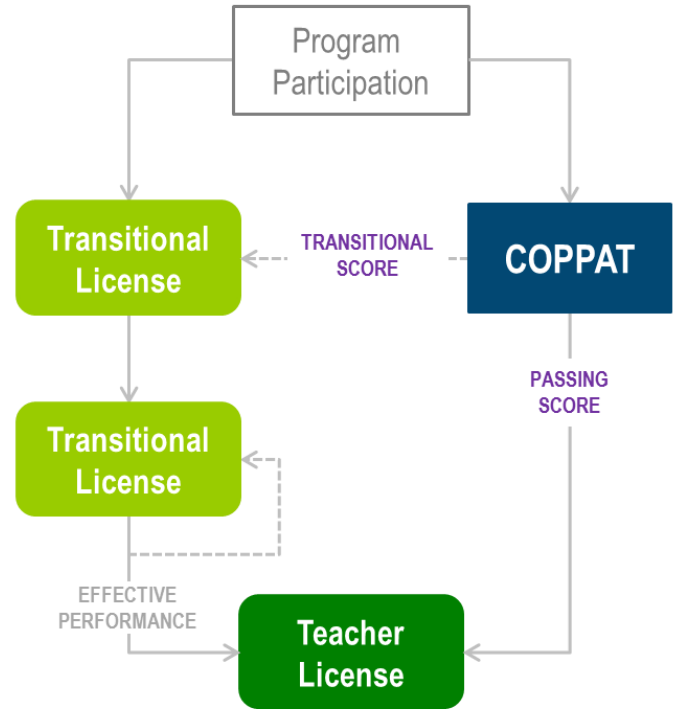
3 years for all candidates



Renews based on 6 credits or 90 hours of professional development.

Proposed CO Licenses

0 – 4 years based on performance



Renews based on effective performance.

LICENSING LEADERS: A NEW VISION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The Changing Demands of School Leadership

The role of the school leader has been changing radically over the past century. The principal, who was once seen as the school's "lead teacher," has become the head of a leadership team responsible for the administration and management of education, facilities and wraparound services. Principals may manage teams that can include hundreds of adult staff members serving thousands of students, or they may be entirely on their own. The opportunities for data management and responsibilities for compliance have expanded rapidly in the past decade.

As the Institute for Educational Leadership writes, "In short, the demands placed on principals have changed, but the profession has not changed to meet those demands — and the tension is starting to show. Principals increasingly say the job is simply not 'doable.'" Many schools and districts have responded by developing new roles that distribute the responsibilities for successfully running a school across multiple leaders: "A leadership team might be made up of a principal, a chief academic officer, a master teacher, a community services coordinator, a management services provider, a school governance council or any combination of these."¹⁴ In many school districts, the principal has to take on all of these roles him- or herself.

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Different schools may succeed best with very different leadership structures, depending on their grade levels, sizes and local contexts. In some schools the principal acts as a CEO, overseeing instructional leaders responsible for pedagogy and content. In others, principals retain instructional leadership while overseeing directors of operations who handle the logistics. Depending on the organization, teachers may be asked to take on a wide variety of mid-level leadership roles, such as coaching other teachers or overseeing the development of classroom materials and curricula.

Two Recommendations for School Leadership

We recommend giving schools two new ways to respond to the changing demands of school leadership. First, teachers' mid-level leadership roles should be recognized and rewarded with a Teacher Leader License. This would help establish a career ladder for teachers while at the same time giving school districts a new, more flexible way to assign leadership tasks.

¹⁴ Usdan, M., McCloud, B., & Podmostko, M. (2000). Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalsip. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.iel.org/programs/21st/reports/principal.pdf>.

Second, we recommend adding a new path to school leadership that reflects the variety of roles that may be included under the title of “principal” by creating a Transitional Principal License. The Transitional Principal License would give school districts the freedom to hire anyone they choose to become a principal, under a short-term license and with the direct mentorship of an established principal. Teacher Leaders might transition to becoming principals; if so, they would need training to learn business and management skills quickly. But school districts might also hire executives or managers from the private, public or nonprofit sector who bring a variety of transferable skills and would need training to quickly learn the fundamentals of quality education.

The Current System for Teachers

Colorado does currently have a licensing tier beyond the basic Professional License held by most teachers: the Master Certificate. The only requirement to obtain a Master Certificate is that a teacher achieves National Board Certification, and teachers who do obtain Master Certificates are supposed to receive an additional stipend. If this program were consistently funded, the automatic stipend would mean that some teachers were compensated more for doing the same job as their colleagues.

In most other professions this would be unheard of; it makes little economic sense to fund an “advanced” payment tier for people doing the same job. Among flight attendants, for example, the lead attendant, the one responsible for other members of the crew, is called the purser. Flight attendants do have to obtain an additional certification to qualify to take on that leadership role. But they receive additional compensation only when they actually perform those essential extra duties. Three flight attendants on the same plane might be certified as pursers, but only one will be serving as the purser and performing the leadership roles; only that individual will be compensated accordingly.¹⁵

Creating More Career Options

On top of these problems, the Master Certificate is not formally associated with many opportunities for teachers to learn, grow and take on new challenges. Indeed, teachers have very few opportunities to advance along a career path in their chosen profession.

Principal Certificates represent the only obvious choice most teachers can see for advancement, and anecdotal reports suggest that many teachers complete advanced coursework and become certified as principals purely for the continuing education units and the additional pay, with no intention of actually serving in that role. This would be like a flight attendant getting a pilot’s license with no intention of flying. Even when teachers do become principals, the fact that this is the only promotion available to them means that the best teachers can only advance their careers by leaving the classroom.

¹⁵ Summary of the United Airlines Flight Attendant AFA-CWA Tentative Agreement 2012–2016. Retrieved from http://www.unitedafa.org/contract/negotiations/docs/ta_complete.pdf.

It doesn't need to be this way. Teachers already take on many leadership roles within schools, leading other teachers and helping them develop. These roles should be defined and recognized, creating career ladder opportunities for effective teachers while allowing students to continue to benefit from their skills.

Teachers already take on many leadership roles within schools, leading other teachers and helping them develop. These roles should be defined and recognized, creating career ladder opportunities for effective teachers while allowing students to continue to benefit from their skills.

The Teacher Leader License

To give school districts additional flexibility in meeting their leadership needs, Colorado should create a Teacher Leader License, a new kind of license that recognizes not only highly effective teaching, but also the competencies needed for teacher leadership roles in schools and school districts.

The Teacher Leader License would not be an additional form of teaching license, but a separate leadership license held in addition to the Teacher License. Conversely, the Teacher Leader License should not be understood as primarily a stepping-stone to becoming a principal. Teacher leadership roles are valuable to schools and districts, and it is likely that many Teacher Leader License holders would have no aspirations to principal roles. Teacher Leaders would take on these essential teacher leadership roles while continuing to teach and to be evaluated as teachers. For those teachers who are interested in becoming principals, the Teacher Leader License should qualify its holder for an accelerated route to a Principal License, as discussed below.

Obtaining and Renewing a Teacher Leader License

To obtain a Teacher Leader License, a teacher would need to demonstrate an average performance record that is better than Effective over the previous five years with particular distinction in the Quality Standard for leadership. This would mean all summative performance ratings as a teacher are at least Effective with one or more ratings of Highly Effective. In addition to this overall record of performance, the candidate would have at least one rating of Highly Effective in Teacher Quality Standard V (*Teachers demonstrate leadership*). This record of performance, along with a recommendation from the school district, would qualify a teacher for a Teacher Leader License.

The Teacher Leader License would be good for five years and renewed independently of the Teacher License. Applications for a Teacher Leader License could be submitted concurrently with a Teacher License, or submitted on a separate renewal cycle when the teacher achieves a qualifying performance record.

Employment as a Teacher Leader

A person holding a Teacher Leader License would not be obliged to apply for any additional leadership roles, nor would the district be obliged to create a leadership role for him or her. The Teacher Leader License would merely designate its holder as being prepared to take on additional, recognized and compensated leadership opportunities. School districts could give priority to Teacher Leader License holders in deciding who gets to mentor new teachers or student teachers, serve as an evaluator, contribute to the design of curriculum and assessments, or serve as a policy fellow at the state level. This additional work would be compensated with additional pay.

Qualifying teacher leadership roles should align to the needs of the school, district and state. We do not recommend that legislation create a comprehensive or exclusive list of qualified roles. Rather, CDE may provide guidelines for the posting, evaluation and compensation of teacher leadership roles.

Assessment of Teacher Leader Performance

For each teacher leadership role, we recommend that the needs of the position be described explicitly and aligned to the relevant Quality Standard(s) or other relevant evaluation criteria. Those Quality Standards (or other established criteria) would be the basis for evaluating the Teacher Leader's work in his or her additional role.

For example, a school that needed mentors for new teachers might describe the position as aligned to part of Principal Quality Standard II, Element c (*Principals support Teachers through ongoing, actionable feedback*). Another school seeking Teacher Leaders to help recruit and select new staff could align those responsibilities to Principal Quality Standard IV, Element b (*Principals establish and effectively manage processes and systems that ensure a knowledgeable, high-quality, high-performing staff*). A school district that needed Teacher Leaders to help align student tests to curriculum standards could evaluate those Teacher Leaders using the same criteria applied to staff in the district's office of assessment or curriculum.

Supervisors for Teacher Leaders would assign performance ratings for the elements aligned to the specific role. This would provide the Teacher Leader with feedback on his or her performance and inform the school's or school district's decision whether or not to rehire the Teacher Leader for the same responsibilities. Renewal of the Teacher Leader License would not be based on these evaluations, however, but the Teacher Quality Standards described above.

The Transitional Principal License

There are currently two ways to become a principal: complete a Department of Higher Education-approved certification program or enroll in an alternate-route licensing program (and in both cases complete an assessment). We recommend creating a third way: a Transitional Principal License for promising leaders who have relevant skills and experience. Any candidate selected based on a rigorous and fair hiring process could hold a Transitional Principal License

while actively serving as a Principal or Assistant Principal. School districts should have the flexibility to establish leadership structures that fit their schools and seek candidates with the qualities and experiences that will allow them to succeed.

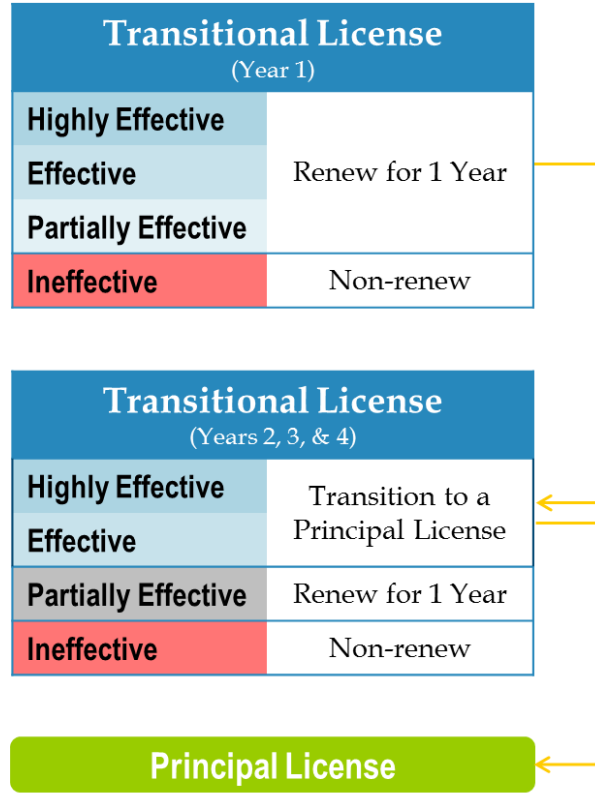
In practice, we would expect districts to use the Transitional Principal License to hire one of two types of people: Teacher Leaders or executives from outside of education. Teacher Leaders would have demonstrated great instructional leadership, but would probably have little management or operational experience. Executives or managers from outside education might have the opposite qualifications. These individuals might have a background working with children in a non-educational setting or they might come from an unrelated field and have demonstrated strengths managing staff and budgets, implementing systemic changes, leading professional development programs or other transferable skills. In either case, the Transitional Principal License holder would need a mentor who could fill the gaps in his or her experience,

School districts should have the flexibility to establish leadership structures that fit their schools and seek candidates with the qualities and experiences that will allow them to succeed.

and would be subject to increased scrutiny until he or she demonstrated effectiveness. Upon selection, therefore, holders of a Transitional Principal License would be connected to a mentor principal who has been identified as Effective. The Transitional Principal License would be renewed yearly, based on performance as measured by the same evaluation system the school district uses for all its principals. (Each school district has the option to evaluate its principals using either the Professional Practices Rubric for Principals provided as a model by the state or its own local evaluation system, subject to approval by CDE.)

Ratings of Partially Effective or better would lead to automatic renewal. The Transitional Principal License could be renewed up to three times, and license holders could transition to a full Principal License after two years with one rating of Effective or better (see figure 10).

Figure 10: Transitional Principal License Renewal



Renewing a Principal License

Currently, principals receive a three year Initial License, then after those three years a Professional License that they can renew every five years. We do not recommend any change to this timetable.

We do, however, recommend that just as with teachers, principal licensure renewal be based on performance, measured using the local evaluation framework for principal performance. We recommend the same renewal and non-renewal thresholds as for teachers:

- At the three-year mark, we recommend that CDE automatically renew the licenses of principals with two ratings of Effective or better, and no ratings of Ineffective. We recommend that CDE not renew the licenses of principals with two or three ratings of Ineffective in the preceding three years. Principals that fall between these two prescribed thresholds could apply to renew their licenses at CDE's discretion.
- For renewals every five years thereafter, we recommend that CDE automatically renew the licenses of principals with at least three ratings of Effective or higher, and no ratings of Ineffective. We recommend that CDE not renew the licenses of principals with two or more ratings of Ineffective in the preceding five years. Principals that fall between these two prescribed thresholds could apply to renew their licenses at CDE's discretion.

PROGRAM APPROVAL: MORE FREEDOM TO INNOVATE

The Current Teacher-Training-Program Approval Process

We recommend an update to the statutes (currently based on the Performance-Based Standards for Colorado Teachers – PBSCT), aligning licensure to the current Quality Standards defined by S.B. 10-191. We further recommend a fundamental change in the state’s focus, shifting from program inputs to individual candidate performance.

Under Colorado’s 1991 Educator Licensing Act, the State Board of Education is charged with recommending to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (DHE) whether an educator preparation program should be approved or reauthorized.

CDE conducts a document review (cover sheets, matrices, and syllabi for each endorsement program and, for designated programs, the literacy rubric) for the eight teacher performance-based standards (TPBS) and additional endorsement standards reflected in the Colorado Educator Licensing Act [§22-60.5 Colorado Revised Statute].¹⁶

In other words, CDE checks to make sure that the content of the program matches the performance standards. The individual participants’ knowledge or skills are not subject to CDE or DHE review. In fact, CDE invites each applying IHE or alternate-route certification program to submit its own tests, quizzes and assessments. That means that the current system carefully regulates inputs but allows for innovation and variation in performance assessments.

That means that the current system carefully regulates inputs but allows for innovation and variation in performance assessments. This is exactly backwards.

This is exactly backwards. Alfie Kohn defined education succinctly: “It’s Not What We Teach; It’s What They Learn.”¹⁷ Students in various programs may engage with the same content at varying levels depending on the quality of their instruction, their individual attention or competing priorities while participating. They may also learn best to be educators in very different ways.

DHE is already doing great work to encourage innovation among teacher preparation programs, but as long as regulations require it to prescribe certain content to teachers, it will always be overseeing

instruction programs primarily based in the classroom.

¹⁶ Reauthorization process for educator preparation programs (updated 1/25/2012). (2012). Colorado Department of Higher Education. Retrieved June 22, 2012 from <http://higher.ed.colorado.gov/Academics/TeacherEd/Educators.html>.

¹⁷ Kohn, A. (2008, September 10). It’s not what we teach; it’s what they learn. *Education Week*, September 10, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/edweek/inwwt.htm>.

The Change: Introducing the COPPAT

We recommend that the state define the performance required for a Teacher License by developing, piloting and endorsing a COPPAT that predicts early career performance on the Quality Standards. Conversely, teacher preparation programs offering the COPPAT should be given even more freedom to innovate. Given CDE's ability to monitor individual teachers' readiness, the state would no longer make it a priority to regulate program inputs.

Instead of focusing primarily or exclusively on offering classroom-based instruction, more innovation may occur within educator preparation programs. For example, some might choose to include a great deal of apprenticeship, or a year-long teaching residency. They could offer content instruction remotely, via the internet. They could invent and offer a next-generation virtual reality teaching simulator. As long as they produced candidates who could prove themselves ready to teach, preparation programs could do just about anything.

Approval from CDE to Offer the COPPAT

We recommend that CDE take on a new authorizing role for all teacher preparation programs who propose to offer the COPPAT as a direct route to a Teacher License. Approval would not be based on the program's content, as in State Board of Education's authorizations for teacher certification programs, but would focus on the technical capabilities and structural context required to reliably administer the COPPAT. Specific requirements might vary depending on the version of COPPAT that CDE ultimately adopts, but we can make some assumptions for what will probably be included.

A significant portion of the COPPAT is likely to include an assessment of classroom instruction in a practicum context. Therefore, any preparation program approved to offer the COPPAT must include sufficient pre-service teaching for the observation and assessment of classroom teaching. In current pilots we have studied, this would require a practicum context where the pre-service teacher participates and teaches in the same classroom for a consecutive series of lessons.

COPPAT Assessors

The predictive power of the COPPAT will not only depend on choosing the right elements of the Quality Standards and collecting the best evidence from candidates to measure them. It will also depend on the consistency of the assessors across Colorado. CDE must therefore exercise some care in selecting appropriate test evaluators. A person who wishes to become a COPPAT evaluator should be an educator (Teacher, Teacher Leader or Principal) who has demonstrated effectiveness in his or her position, should participate in a CDE-approved training session to learn how to apply the required rubrics properly, and be authorized by CDE as a COPPAT assessor. To avoid conflicts of interest, no teacher candidate should have his or her COPPAT rated by a direct mentor or supervising teacher. If possible, the evaluator should come from outside the candidate's training program.

CDE should also register individual assessors so that it can monitor trends in scoring during the pilot and beyond. This would allow CDE to identify assessors whose scores do a better or worse job of predicting of early career performance, and to manage the consistency of the COPPAT.

Fostering Public Accountability with Aggregate COPPAT Data

Currently, the only power CDE has to impose accountability on teacher preparation programs is the blunt instrument of recommending the approval or denial of a program's authorization to DHE. Yet the state already plans to publish the aggregate professional performance ratings for a program's graduates over their first three years in teaching. We recommend that CDE also publish aggregate data on the COPPAT for each year of graduates from a preparation program. Together, these two sources of performance data would create a mechanism of public accountability for graduate performance that could drive program improvement while offering informative feedback to program operators.

We know this approach can work. Since 2004, Louisiana has developed a system to measure and aggregate the performance of program graduates serving a subset of grades, using value-added methodology.¹⁸ This program has created transparency and spurred significant program innovation and improvement.

The Louisiana system is limited, however, because the value-added methodology cannot cover all grade levels and endorsement areas. We recommend that Colorado do something similar to Louisiana, but ensure more complete coverage by using the summative rating assigned by S.B. 10-191 evaluations. Colorado should publish results summarizing the performance of cohorts of program graduates to preserve the anonymity of individual teachers while offering meaningful information to the public.

Constituent Groups that Would Benefit

School districts and school leaders could use the aggregated results to inform hiring decisions. A leader faced with two equally qualified candidates may already favor candidates from programs with stronger reputations. In the future, those preferences might be more reliably informed by the actual performance track record of the programs' graduates. School districts hiring many graduates from a single program could also customize their induction and support programs to complement the strengths and needs that emerge in the early-career evaluations of previous graduates.

Potential teacher trainees could use the data from a COPPAT and early-career performance to make matriculation decisions, in much the same way that applicants to law schools use those programs' bar-passage rates. Similarly, students applying to all sorts of professional programs, including law schools and MBA programs, consider the employment rate of their graduates. These are practical considerations for all students planning to invest time and money in

¹⁸ *Teacher Education Initiatives*. Web. Baton Rouge, LA: The Louisiana Board of Regents. Retrieved June 22, 2012 from <http://regents.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=113>.

professional preparation programs. Transparent indicators of program quality will reward those programs with the best-prepared and highest-rated graduates.

Finally, DHE may use the valuable longitudinal data to guide its recommendations to educator preparation programs. DHE may also use the results to identify programs with particular strengths and encourage them to expand, replicate or connect with and help other programs in need of improvement. DHE may also help connect programs that graduate high-performing educators in a particular endorsement area with districts that need that type of educator.

Transparent indicators of program quality will reward those programs with the best-prepared and highest-rated graduates.

ALIGNING ENDORSEMENTS WITH CURRICULUM AND DISTRICT NEEDS

The Current System of Endorsements

“Endorsements” describe the areas an instructor is allowed to teach under his or her existing license. Under the current system, teachers are licensed to teach specific grades:

- The Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education endorsements cover teachers of students from birth to age 8.
- The Elementary endorsement covers teachers of students from kindergarten through grade 6.
- The Secondary endorsement covers teachers of students in grades 7 through 12.
- The Special Education Generalist endorsement covers teachers of students from kindergarten through grade 12.

Teachers with a Secondary license must also obtain an endorsement in a specific content area. The options are:

- Agriculture/Renewable Natural Resources
- Art
- Business Education
- Drama
- English Language Arts
- Family and Consumer Studies
- Marketing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Speech
- Technology Education
- Trade
- Industry Education

Based on our discussions with teachers and administrators and with representatives from institutions of higher education, districts and schools, we recommend modifying the existing system to align teacher licensure areas, competencies and requirements with the Colorado Academic Standards and the Teacher Quality Standards. Our recommendations are based on a comprehensive analysis of other state licensing systems and our discussions with these representatives concerning specific grade span models. In most cases, our recommendations would add optional specializations to give programs more freedom to focus on specific areas and individuals the chance to specialize and be more marketable. We recognize the diverse needs of Colorado’s urban and rural districts, and have aimed to suggest a system that does not create new staffing challenges for them. In the end, rural districts might look largely the same as they do now, but larger districts could hire more specialists.

Recommended Changes to Grade Ranges

In place of the current grade level structure we recommend that Transitional and Teacher Licenses be issued in the following grade spans:

- Pre-kindergarten through grade 3
- Grades 1 through 6
- Grades 4 through 8
- Grades 6 through 12
- Kindergarten through grade 12 (in some cases)

We believe this better reflects the actual age ranges that are part of public school programs, corresponding to Early Childhood, Elementary School, Middle Grades and Secondary School. Teacher endorsements would no longer cover those working with newborns, though of course the Department of Human Services should continue to regulate child care centers that address the needs of very young children in non-public school settings.

Colorado would also once again offer a license in Middle Grades. Larger districts and IHEs have been demanding this license, claiming it is an area of great need. As one district HR director told us, “People in our district are *begging* for a middle school endorsement in the core content areas. Right now, we find it difficult to find a true middle school math candidate who is highly qualified, for instance.”

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The Middle Grades endorsement is intended to give training programs and the teacher candidates in them the opportunity to focus on the developmental needs of middle-grade students and the level of content specific to these needs. We have deliberately recommended structuring it to overlap with both the Elementary and Secondary School licenses to avoid creating staffing complications for schools. A district could continue to staff all of its schools with Elementary and Secondary teachers, and teachers with Elementary and Secondary licenses could continue to teach middle grades.

K-12 licenses would be intended for those who also receive content area endorsements in:

- Career and Technical Education
- Health and Physical Education
- Library, Media and Instructional Technology
- Visual and Performing Arts
- World Languages

We recommend similar changes for Special Education licenses. Colorado should issue Special Education licenses in the following grade spans:

- Pre-kindergarten through grade 3
- Kindergarten through grade 8
- Grades 6 through 12

These age-range-focused licenses would better serve the needs of students than the current K-12 Special Education Generalist license, which we recommend eliminating because it is far too broad to ensure that teachers are prepared to work with specific groups of students. But we do recommend that Colorado continue offering or create K-12 Special Education *Specialist* licenses for those who wish to concentrate on certain populations and needs, such as Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Visually Impaired and Gifted and Talented.

Recommended Changes to Endorsement Areas

We recommend optional content area endorsements for holders of Elementary licenses. The development of literacy and numeracy in the early grades are highly important, so individuals and programs should be given the opportunity to specialize in these areas. All elementary licensed teachers would still have to meet the competencies for all subject areas but could choose to focus on Mathematics or on Reading, Writing and Communicating as a content area specialty. This option would address critical needs in these areas and make candidates more marketable. Even if a candidate chooses an endorsement area, he or she would be qualified to teach all subjects.

We recommend that content area endorsements be required for holders of Middle Grades licenses, and continue to be so for holders of Secondary licenses. But those content areas should be changed to reflect the Colorado Academic Standards. These standards (along with the Teacher Quality Standards) should be the starting point for revising the competencies in each content area. In addition to the content areas, candidates and programs should be given the option for further specialization within Science and Social Studies (e.g., Life Sciences, Physical Sciences or History and Geography).

See *Appendix A* for a complete list of recommended content area endorsements with their accompanying recommended exams.

Making It Easier for Effective Educators to Add Endorsements

Currently, educators in Colorado can add new endorsements to their licenses in two ways: by acquiring 24 credit-hours of approved coursework, or by passing the appropriate content area exam. Endorsement by exam is not available in all areas.

These standards for adding endorsements are the same for all teachers: any licensed teacher can apply to add endorsements through the satisfaction of the requirements. This makes no sense:

to expand their licensure, consistently effective teachers must clear the same hurdles as struggling ones.

Teachers who are effective in their primary content areas should be afforded greater opportunity to meet school and school district needs and to pursue their own professional goals. We therefore propose an alternative method to add endorsements that would be available only to effective educators who could extend their licenses based on demonstrated performance in teaching the new content area. This would help school districts staff areas of persistent need with proven teachers, and would offer more flexibility to schools by allowing existing teachers to fill partial gaps in the schedule — as when, for example, a school needs a teacher for only one or two periods of art or computer science.

Teachers with three years of demonstrated effectiveness (as shown by performance ratings of “Effective” or higher) could add one “transitional endorsement” simply by passing the required content area exams. Transitional endorsements would not require additional coursework and would become permanent based on demonstrated performance in the new content area. Teachers without such a record of effectiveness in their primary content areas would no longer be able to add endorsements by passing content area exams. Colorado may wish to retain a more traditional credit-hour pathway for partially effective educators to add endorsements, or it may decide it is reasonable to limit applications for additional endorsements to educators who are already demonstrating effective performance.

With the support of the school or school district and an active teaching position in the new area, a transitional endorsement would be valid for one year. This would limit the potential risk of exposing students to teachers who prove to be ineffective in a new content area.

Renewing Transitional Endorsements

A transitional endorsement could be renewed with criteria similar to those used for the Transitional License: Teachers could twice renew the one-year transitional endorsement with a rating of Partially Effective. They could not renew it with a rating of Ineffective. After one year of Effective performance in the new content area, the endorsement would become permanent.

Effectiveness would be determined using the Quality Standards in S.B. 10-191. In cases where the new content area represented a teachers’ full load (for example, Grade 1, or five sections of middle school math), that teacher’s overall performance evaluation ratings would determine his or her effectiveness.

In cases where a teacher was teaching a mixed schedule, however, it may be more difficult to separately assess the class(es) or class period(s) taught under the transitional endorsement. Ideally, the district would isolate evaluation evidence for Teacher Quality Standard VI (*Student Academic Growth*) for students in the new endorsement area, so that it could be rated using the same guidelines and weights as the overall Standard. The district would also isolate all other evidence included in the overall professional evaluation (student or parent surveys, review of lesson plans), so that it could be rated separately to the extent possible.

Imagine an effective middle school math teacher with five years of experience who begins teaching science under a transitional endorsement after passing the required content exam. She may be teaching four periods of middle school math and one period of middle school science. Her professional evaluation rating would reflect her overall performance across all five classes. For the purpose of renewing the transitional endorsement in science or making it permanent, CDE would consider a rating based on evidence from the single period of science instruction. This would include evidence of student growth and formal observation(s) of classroom practice, and might potentially include isolated survey results from students in the science class and their parents.

In some cases it may simply be too difficult for a district to isolate student growth data for part of a teacher's workload in this way. But formal observation of classroom practice in the new endorsement area should always be possible, which is why we recommend classroom observation as the minimum standard CDE should accept for extending a new endorsement.

WHAT TO ASSESS: DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE COPPAT

The TPA

We recommend that Colorado model at least one pilot version of the COPPAT on the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) currently being tested across the country (including at the University of Colorado – Boulder). The TPA is based on the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT), first developed in 2002 and now used in dozens of California teacher education programs.

TPA is only compatible with programs offering a practicum, or classroom teaching experience. For the TPA assessment (called the Teaching Event), a teacher candidate must plan lessons, teach those lessons in public school classrooms, administer tests or homework to students, reflect on the effectiveness of his or her teaching and examine student work and grades as evidence of that effectiveness. TPA assessors grade teacher candidates based on their lesson plans, their artifacts, their personal reflections and commentaries, their students' work and videos of the their performances. These assessors receive two days of training to ensure inter-rater reliability and are not directly connected to the pre-service teacher. It takes about a week to compile the Teaching Event and scoring costs about \$400 per participant.

Twenty states have already joined together in a consortium poised to adopt the TPA should it prove reliable and valid. For Colorado, joining this consortium would support licensing reciprocity with other states. It would also allow Colorado to benefit from those states' contributions to developing and fine-tuning the assessment.

Twenty states have already joined together in a consortium poised to adopt the TPA should it prove reliable and valid. For Colorado, joining this consortium would support licensing reciprocity with other states. It would also allow Colorado to benefit from those states' contributions to developing and fine-tuning the assessment.

We cannot wholeheartedly recommend that Colorado adopt the TPA until more data are available – though data from a large pilot are expected to be available for a robust validation effort within the year. Likewise, we would not suggest that CDE confer Teacher Licenses based on a version of the TPA until it is tested in Colorado. (A recommended pilot timeline is discussed below.) But we do recommend that Colorado join with other states to build on the strong foundation established in California with PACT.

The existing PACT tasks and scoring system are based on California's teacher quality standards. TPA will be aligned to the performance standards in the various states participating in pilot efforts. For a COPPAT, Colorado would of course need to modify the rubrics to align to the

Quality Standards in S.B. 10-191. We offer several examples of how this could work in the coming subsections.

Elements to Assess in a COPPAT

A COPPAT that successfully predicts success as a professional teacher will measure those Quality Standards that often help teachers out of the gate in their first few years of teaching. Based on our discussions with with representatives from institutions of higher education, districts and schools and leading teacher preparation programs, we will suggest a few Quality Standards and elements that fit and that can reasonably be assessed during student teaching in a pre-service or practicum context.

School leaders, IHEs and leading preparation programs such as TNTP's own national alternative-route programs often emphasize that new teachers must establish and maintain effective classroom cultures because their success or failure in their first few years largely depends on it. Three elements of Quality Standard 2 (*Teachers establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students*) directly relate to classroom cultures and are readily assessed in a practicum context. In the TPA, comparable standards are evaluated using evidence from videotaped lessons, commentary on the practicum teaching context submitted by the teacher, lesson plans and accompanying commentary about the planning process.

- *Element 2A: Teachers foster a predictable learning environment in the classroom in which each student has a positive, nurturing relationship with caring adults and peers.*
- *Element 2D: Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students, including those with special needs across a range of ability levels.*
- *Element 2F: Teachers create a learning environment characterized by acceptable student behavior, efficient use of time, and appropriate intervention strategies.*

While no less essential, many elements of Quality Standard 1 (*Teachers demonstrate mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach...*) are harder to assess in a practicum setting. One element may be assessed for all teachers while two others are specific by subject area. In the TPA, the following element would be assessed by the submitted lesson plans, instructional materials and planning commentary for all teachers:

- *Element 1A: Teachers provide instruction that is aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards; their District's organized plan of instruction; and the individual needs of their students.*

Candidates seeking endorsements in math, reading or elementary grades might also provide evidence of the following additional elements:

- *Element 1B: Teachers demonstrate knowledge of student literacy development in reading, writing, speaking and listening.*
- *Element 1C: Teachers demonstrate knowledge of mathematics and understand how to promote student development in numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and measurement, and data analysis and probability.*

Elements related to planning in Teacher Quality Standard 3 (*Teachers plan and deliver effective instruction and create an environment that facilitates learning for their students*) are probably the most challenging to assess in a practicum context. It is essential that Colorado's teachers be able to set measurable student learning goals and track their students' progress towards these goals, effectively modifying instruction based on ongoing assessments. But the temporary nature of the practicum teaching context and the supports available to pre-service teachers make it challenging to assess most elements of this Quality Standard. We do recommend including and assessing the following elements, which are similar to ones assessed by the TPA using evidence from submitted lesson plans, videotaped lessons, planning commentary and the tests and homework used by the teacher to gauge student success.

- *Element 3B: Teachers plan and consistently deliver instruction that draws on results of student assessments, is aligned to academic standards, and advances students' level of content knowledge and skills.*
- *Element 3G: Teachers communicate effectively, making learning objectives clear and providing appropriate models of language.*
- *Element 3H: Teachers use appropriate methods to assess what each student has learned, including formal and informal assessments, and use results to plan further instruction.*

Finally, all teachers are expected to develop significantly over their first several years in the classroom. To do that they will need to reflect on their own practice and the growth of their students as they encounter challenges and learn from them. One element of Quality Standard 4 (*Teachers reflect on their practice*) could be reliably assessed in a practicum context. The TPA assesses something similar using submitted assessments, samples of student work and a commentary on the submitted assessment.

- *Element 4A: Teachers demonstrate that they analyze student learning, development, and growth and apply what they learn to improve their practice.*

These eight elements we recommend for inclusion in the COPPAT do not reflect all the skills required to be a successful teacher. We have only isolated those elements that we believe are important to early career success and that can be assessed in a practicum context.

The pilot period for a COPPAT will affirm which elements are most predictive of overall success on the full annual evaluations of performance using all elements of the Quality Standards. We expect that certain elements will emerge as more predictive or as more reliable to assess. CDE should remain open to adjustments throughout the pilot period.

TRANSITION TIMELINE: THE PATH FORWARD

A law creating this new licensing system could be introduced no earlier than the spring of 2013, and rules could not be promulgated until 2014 at the earliest. Universal data from teacher evaluations under the new rating system will be available beginning with the 2013–2014 school year. Additional data from a broad pilot test of the TPA will also be available after 2012–2013 to inform the development of a COPPAT.

With these mileposts in mind, we recommend the following transitional schedule.

Transitional Licenses would be issued for the first time leading into the 2014–2015 school year. Existing Initial Licenses would be replaced with Transitional Licenses heading into the 2015–2016 school year. Transitional Licenses would be subject to the renewal standards outlined above from the moment of their issue.

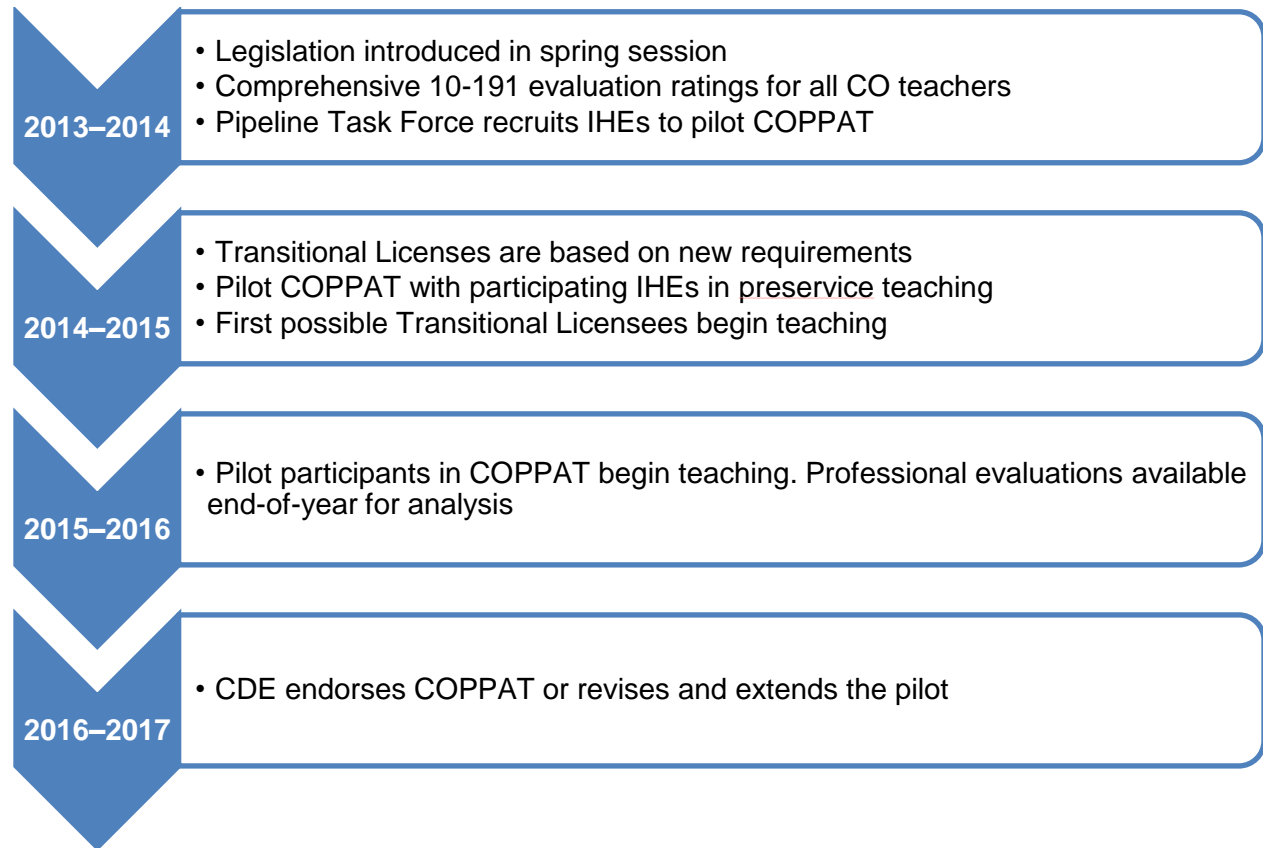
Existing licenses would be made subject to the renewal standards described above as soon as possible. Starting with the 2016–2017 school year, no teacher would be required to submit proof of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or credit-hours for renewal if he or she preferred to have his or her license renewal based on the state’s Quality Standards. At that point, each teacher should have three years of S.B. 10-191 evaluations, enough of a record of performance to renew a Teacher License for five years. Teachers who did not meet the requirements for auto-renewal based on their evaluations but who had invested in credits, CEUs or professional development would be subject to CDE review and discretion as described above.

We recommend these elements for immediate adoption once the supporting legislation takes effect. It will be somewhat more challenging to develop and validate a COPPAT as an instrument that predicts classroom performance. As with any pilot, we cannot be certain that the first instrument(s) tested for a COPPAT will yield reliable predictions of early-career performance.

In keeping with Colorado’s record of thoughtful and deliberate reform, we therefore recommend that Teacher Licenses not be issued to new teachers through this mechanism until a COPPAT has been validated. The cautious approach of waiting to issue Teacher Licenses using a COPPAT will ensure all partners involved remain focused on the goal of developing and delivering an assessment that accurately predicts evaluation ratings in Colorado. It would also allow for multiple parallel pilot versions of COPPAT and more innovative thinking.

During the 2013–2014 school year the Colorado Pipeline Task Force would recruit teacher-training programs to develop and pilot the assessment. From 2014 to 2016, one or more COPPAT(s) would be pilot-tested on teacher trainees, with results reported to CDE but not used to issue Teacher Licenses. Instead, during the pilot period Colorado teacher training programs would continue to award Initial Licenses. The 2015–2016 school year would still be the first year of teaching for the initial pilot cohort who had taken a COPPAT and received Initial Licenses, and CDE could then compare that initial cohort’s first-year performance ratings to their COPPAT results to determine the assessment’s reliability and validity. If that first version of a COPPAT proves valid CDE would adopt it then; if it does not, CDE could extend the pilot period and make informed revisions to the proposed system.

Figure 11: A Timeline to Establish Predictive Validity



HOW WE GOT HERE: GENERATING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLORADO LICENSURE

Background Research

Support from educators, researchers and policy advocates for a new approach to licensure has been growing in recent years despite different opinions about the purpose, function and requirements for licensing school personnel. Along with Colorado, many states have begun to align their licensure systems to 21st-century understanding of teacher performance. Our work in establishing recommendations for the revision of licensure in Colorado was informed by a comprehensive review of national certification requirements and emerging legislation from across the country.

States including Colorado have come to realize that educator licensing and certification requirements across the United States do not ensure a high quality workforce. Research findings suggest that certification or licensure status is not an indicator of acceptable performance.

Multiple studies have shown no correlation between:

- A Master's degree in education and student reading scores¹⁹
- A Master's degree in education and student math scores²⁰
- A teacher's licensure test scores and student reading or math scores²¹

What does accurately predict high-quality performance is a record of high-quality performance.²² Value-added modeling, classroom observation rubrics²³ and student surveys²⁴ have opened new frontiers in creating a robust and reliable picture of teacher performance. In the 20th century, performance measurement for teachers didn't exist. In the 21st century, Colorado is leading the nation in defining reliable ways to measure and reward teacher performance.

¹⁹ Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd, H.F., & Vigdor, J.L. (2010). How and why do teacher credentials matter for student achievement? *CALDER Working Paper 2*. Retrieved from <http://www.caldercenter.org/publications/calder-working-paper-2.cfm>.

²⁰ Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A. & Kain, J.F. (2005). Teachers, schools and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, 79, 418-458. Retrieved from <http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/staiger/files/HanushekRivkinKain%2BEcta%2B2005.pdf>.

²¹ Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor.

²² Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Hedges, L.V. (2004). How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 26, 237-257. Retrieved from <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/002/834/127%20-%20Nye%20B%20Hedges%20L%20V%20%20Konstantopoulos%20S%20%20%282004%29.pdf>.

²³ Rockoff, J.E., & Spononi, C. (2011). Subjective and objective evaluations of teacher effectiveness: evidence from New York City. *Labour Economics*, 18, 687-696. Retrieved from <http://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jrockoff/research.html>.

Kane, T.J., Taylor, E.S., Tyler, J.H., & Wooten, A.L. (2010). Identifying effective classroom practices using student achievement data. *NBER Working Paper No. 15803*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15803>.

Taylor, E.S., & Tyler, J.H. (2011). The effect of evaluation on performance: evidence from longitudinal student achievement data of mid-career teachers. *NBER Working Paper No. 16877*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16877>.

²⁴ Gates Foundation, 2010

Educator Effectiveness in Colorado

S.B. 10-191, signed into law by Governor Bill Ritter in May 2010, signaled a statewide focus on educator effectiveness. Through this law's definition of Quality Standards, and the ensuing thoughtful process to decide how to measure them, Colorado has become a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of education in Colorado by raising the status of teachers.

S.B. 10-191 created the State Council for Educator Effectiveness and charged it with the task of making recommendations for the creation and implementation of a system of evaluation. In their report, the Council emphasized the importance of aligned systems in the state, asserting that the changes anticipated as a result of S.B. 10-191 would require changes to other systems:

If education is to dramatically improve in this state, all components of our education system must serve to increase the numbers of educators who are able to be successful ... The state and its districts must be willing to commit to the process of ensuring that the education system operates in a way that is coherent and supportive of both educator effectiveness and student outcomes.²⁵

The Council identified educator licensing as the first system in need of changes. They recommended a "review and revamping of the state's licensure system which is based on professional standards that were developed in the early 1990's," and charged the state to "revamp its educator licensing system to help ensure, support and drive increased effectiveness of educators entering the profession from a wide variety of backgrounds."

The Council further recommended that this review and revamping of the system be based on the following guiding principles:

1. Initial licensure should be a strong indicator of likely effectiveness.
2. Professional licensure should be an indicator of demonstrated effectiveness.
3. The licensure system should be aligned with the objectives and approaches of the state's educator evaluation system, as outlined in S.B. 10-191 and articulated in state rules. Licensure should be aligned with the state's educator effectiveness definitions, Teacher and Principal Quality Standards, and performance standards.
4. The process of attaining and/or renewing a license should be valuable and should support increased effectiveness.
5. The system of processing license requests should be user-friendly, timely, responsive and reflective of current technology.

Creation of the Educator Pipeline Task Force

In line with these recommendations, CDE's Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team identified seven strategic focus areas for achieving the vision of effective educators for every student and effective leaders for every school. The third of these focus areas was the impetus for the work of this project: Develop effectiveness-based systems of educator licensing, preparation and induction aligned with the state's educator evaluation system.

²⁵ State Council for Educator Effectiveness. (2011). *State Council for Educator Effectiveness Report and Recommendations: Submitted to the Colorado State Board of Education Pursuant to S.B. 10-191*. Denver, CO: Author. p. 8.

To support this effort, the Rose Community Foundation provided funding to TNTP to review educator licensing and make recommendations for redesigning the system. TNTP partnered with CDE and the Department of Higher Education to involve key stakeholders and audiences across the state through the Educator Pipeline Task Force. While the purpose of TNTP's work was to provide an independent report on the current licensure system and recommend changes that would align it with S.B. 10-191, we clearly needed to involve the state departments directly responsible for the relevant systems.

As part of this initiative, the partners convened a group of representatives from institutions of higher education, professional organizations representing education professionals, districts and schools. The members of this group provided feedback on the research plan, survey development, design principles and specific recommendations. TNTP's role has been to gather and synthesize data and research to inform this report, which has been written with extensive input from and collaboration with leadership at CDE and DHE.

Two Initial Models: Deregulation and More Rigorous Inputs

We considered two initial models of reform. On the one hand, some have suggested the elimination (or serious deregulation) of educator licensing, arguing that current systems do not ensure competency or even protect “against unqualified aspirants willing to slog through the requirements.”²⁶ Others recommend that licensing be made more rigorous by requiring more and higher quality preparation or by raising entry scores on licensing exams or entry requirements for preparation programs. We examined both approaches and presented them to key audiences, including the Educator Pipeline Task Force.

When asked about the possibility of raising standards on testing and coursework for initial licensing, district and school leaders emphasized the importance of the initial license in certifying an educator's readiness for the profession. They raised concerns about the current approach and its ability to certify readiness in the areas of greatest need (e.g., classroom management, literacy instruction and assessment). Teachers strongly recommended a higher standard for entry to the profession.

When asked about basing license renewal on the state's new Quality Standards, teachers and school leaders raised concerns about conflating the purposes of evaluation and licensure. They worried that using evaluation ratings for licensure decisions could result in a double penalty for educators, who could be at risk of losing their job and their license based on evaluation, and that this might discourage educators from taking on new assignments. District leaders generally cautioned that the use of local evaluation for licensure decisions should be done thoughtfully and be based on multiple years of data. While there was support for basing licensure decisions on performance, some members of the Educator Pipeline Task Force did not support evaluation results as the sole measure of performance for licensure decisions.

When asked about the idea of rewarding Highly Effective educators with an advanced license — like the Teacher Leader License we recommend here — many groups suggested that

²⁶ Hess, F. M. (2001). *Tear Down This Wall: The Case for a Radical Overhaul of Teacher Certification*. Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute.

advanced performance should acknowledge service to the profession, advanced content knowledge and contributions to school culture. In addition, several raised concerns about how evaluation rating variance could result in the loss of an advanced license.

On the other hand, when we asked about the possibility of completely or largely eliminating state licensing standards, we encountered widespread opposition. Many groups emphasized that such a change would not benefit students, would degrade the standing of the profession and could have other unintended consequences, such as the loss of reciprocity for a Colorado license in other states. District representatives were especially concerned about their ability to take over the functions currently served by the state licensing unit (e.g., background check monitoring, investigating unethical behavior, verifying out-of-state credentials and monitoring content of preparation programs). Additional concerns were raised about federal funding requirements and rules that are currently tied to highly qualified status, particularly for federal programs and special education. While some would like to see less regulation (or at least more meaningful regulation) at the state level, there was virtually no support for the elimination of educator licenses.

Finally, we asked about shifting the state's emphasis from monitoring inputs to monitoring outcomes, and most groups did support the idea of basing decisions such as teacher-training-program approval heavily on outcomes. Some raised concerns about the idea of making public the kind of educator performance data that would allow a free market system to operate, particularly making public individual educator performance data.

A Middle Ground

All this feedback, coupled with our research, indicated the need for a middle-ground model that includes some aspects of each initial approach, along with some additional components. We believe that this model is the most likely to position Colorado to advance student outcomes by ensuring more high-quality entrants to the profession, basing licensing decisions on more meaningful criteria. We recommend eliminating hurdles for teachers who are consistently meeting performance standards. In response to the Pipeline Task Force's desire that evaluation results not be used as the sole deciding factor in licensure decisions, we recommend a discretionary review process for many teachers who do not show that consistency at the time of their renewal.

All this feedback, coupled with our research, indicated the need for a middle-ground model that includes some aspects of each initial approach.

The system we have recommended sets a clear minimum bar for obtaining or renewing the Teacher License. Currently, this level of license is attainable by the passage of years. In this case, we recommend the path of increased rigor, but based on outcomes rather than inputs. Individual applicants for the license would have to demonstrate that they are likely to become effective teachers. Teachers demonstrating consistently effective performance would not have to spend time and money on a renewal application.

For entrants to the profession, we recommend a radical simplification of the current system of licenses and authorizations. We recommend a single Transitional License to all entrants who meet qualifications for employment by a school district. By allowing school districts to vary their requirements for Transitional Licenses in response to the various and diverse labor markets across Colorado, we generate flexibility where current requirements are not predictive.

We do know something about the knowledge and skills required to be a good teacher — and in fact we have codified that understanding in the state’s Quality Standards. Colorado has a significant opportunity to use its Quality Standards to make licensure a more rigorous and meaningful system that is supportive of educators and focused on student learning.

But there are also instances in which the state would be better served by decreasing regulations and rethinking outdated and unproven aspects of licensing that prevent districts from recruiting the teachers and leaders they need.

Where it can, the state should strengthen or re-envision aspects of licensing to better serve the public and increase the quality of the workforce. Where current structures are, at best, of questionable impact or, at worst, an impediment to quality education, the state should remove them.

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CONCLUSION: EXPANDING OPTIONS AND INCREASING FLEXIBILITY

Our vision for educator licensure in Colorado widens the gates to the teaching profession by expanding autonomy in hiring for schools and districts and lowering barriers to entry for new teachers. It also focuses CDE's licensing decisions on teachers' actual classroom performance, making a license more of an assurance that an educator will help students achieve. As the director of an alternative licensure program told us, "I really like the idea of being held to high standards with more flexibility for how we meet those standards."

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Transitional Licenses, for example, would allow school districts to hire promising candidates based on professional experiences or content knowledge and vary their requirements based on local needs and the local labor market. Allowing school districts to define the requirements for new hires under Transitional Licenses allows for this local variation in the available talent pool. Some school districts may have access to retirees from technical fields like engineering or computer science, whom they could attract and support to meet persistent teacher shortages. Other school districts may be located in cities or near universities with large numbers of education graduates who could participate in the COPPAT and begin teaching under a Teacher License, and so might make very limited use of Transitional Licenses. School districts should have the flexibility to define and establish local hiring standards beyond the minimum state standard for the issuance of Transitional Licenses so long as they are published, fair and legal under Colorado's standards for Equal Opportunity Employment.

At the same time as Colorado would be widening the gate for new hires, the terms of the Transitional License create a safety net. Teachers who begin teaching with a Transitional License must quickly demonstrate at least Partially Effective performance. In this way, Colorado can offer school districts the flexibility to expand the talent pool from which they hire while carefully monitoring and managing individual teacher performance from the first year in the classroom.

Similarly, the Teacher Leader License and Transitional Principal License would give school districts more freedom in hiring to meet their leadership needs, while creating a structure that holds new leaders accountable for their performance.

In sum, we have proposed a system that issues educator licenses based on those qualifications that reflect classroom success while significantly simplifying the current system to reduce costs and barriers that do not.

APPENDIX A: CONTENT AREA ENDORSEMENTS FOR TRANSITIONAL AND TEACHER LICENSES WITH REQUIRED ENDORSEMENT-AREA EXAMS

NOTE: Exam numbers in parenthesis refer to the applicable PRAXIS exam that could be adopted immediately. We recommend, however, that CDE look to develop or adopt more robust assessments of content pedagogical knowledge, especially in key areas such as literacy and mathematics.

Early Childhood License			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT Early Childhood Education: Content Knowledge (0022 and 5022) Teaching Reading (0204 and 5204)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Elementary Licenses			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT Elementary Education: Content Knowledge – passing score required in each subarea (0014 and 5014) Reading Across the Curriculum: Elementary (0201 and 5201)	N/A	Mathematics Reading, Writing and Communicating	TBD Teaching Reading (0204 and 5204)
Middle Grades			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT	Mathematics		Middle School Mathematics (0069)
	Reading, Writing and Communicating		Middle School English Language Arts (0049)
	Science		Middle School Science (0439)
	Social Studies		Middle School Social Studies (0089)

Secondary			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT	Mathematics		Mathematics: Content Knowledge (0061)
	Reading, Writing and Communicating		English Language, Literature and Composition: Content Knowledge (0041)
	Science		General Science: Content Knowledge (0435)
		Earth Sciences	Earth and Space Sciences: Content Knowledge (0571)
		Life Sciences	Biology: Content Knowledge (0231)
		Physical Sciences	Physical Science: Content Knowledge (0481)
	Social Studies		Social Studies Content Knowledge (0081)
		Civics	Citizenship Education: Content Knowledge (0087) OR Government/Political Science (0930)
		Economics	Economics (0910)
		Geography	Geography (0921)
		History	World and U.S. History: Content Knowledge (5941)
Career and Technical Education			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
TBD	Agriculture and Natural Resources		Same as current
	Business and Public Administration		Same as current
	Hospitality, Human Services and Education		Same as current
	Skilled Trades and Technical Sciences		Same as current

Visual and Performing Arts			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT	Dance		Same as current
	Drama and Theater Arts		Same as current
	Music		Same as current
World Languages			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT	American Sign Language		TBD
	French		French: World Language (5174)
	German		German: World Language (5183)
	Italian		Same as current
	Japanese		Same as current
	Latin		Latin (0601)
	Mandarin		Chinese (Mandarin): World Language (5665)
	Russian		Same as current
	Spanish		Spanish: World Language (5195)
Special Education Generalist			
Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT	PK-3		Special Ed: Early Childhood (0691)
	K-8	Mathematics	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354) Elementary or Middle Grades Math Content Exam

		Reading, Writing and Communicating	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354) Elementary or Middle Grades ELA Content Exam
		High-Incidence Disabilities	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (0543) Special Education: Teaching Students (1 of applicable tests)
		Low-Incidence Disabilities	Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications Special Education: Teaching Students (1 of applicable tests)
	6-12	Mathematics	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354) Middle Grades or Secondary Math Content Exam
		Reading, Writing and Communicating	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354) Middle Grades or Secondary ELA Content Exam
		Science	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354) Middle Grades Science or Secondary General Science Content Area Exam
		Social Studies	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354) Middle Grades or Secondary Social Studies Content Area Exam

		High-Incidence Disabilities	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications (0543) Special Education: Teaching Students (1 of applicable tests)
		Low-Incidence Disabilities	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Severe to Profound Applications Special Education: Teaching Students (1 of applicable tests)

Special Education: Specialist

(these require advanced study and are K-12 endorsements)

Licensure Exams	Content Areas (required)	Content Areas (optional/specialty)	Content Area Exams
COPPAT	Deaf/Hard of Hearing		Special Education: Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (0272)
	Gifted and Talented		Gifted Education (0357)
	Visually Impaired		Special Education: Teaching Students with Visual Impairments (0281)

Colorado has already begun to reimagine education as an elite profession capable of attracting the best and the brightest. It is time to reinvent licensure in service of that vision.

