



PEBC believes that Colorado must continue to require teachers to obtain educator licensure. This stems from our belief that every child deserves access to excellent educators. PEBC also believes in the elevation of the education profession. As such, we will continue to offer residency that leads to licensure for districts and schools across our state. We know that licensure, connected to high quality preparation programs, is a proven path to developing effective teachers who are committed to their students and their profession. PEBC's work demonstrates this value.

To strip the system of this important bar for entry, especially in districts that struggle to recruit great teachers for persistently underserved populations, will do a disservice over time to the profession and ultimately to students in our state. When the guardrails for entering the profession cease to exist, the commitment to our students is greatly diminished. Research shows that teacher turnover results in an irretrievably negative disservice to students and their learning. (Ingersoll, R. M., 2001).

Teachers carry the greatest responsibility in our society. They develop minds - the minds of our future doctors, nurses, lawyers, architects, and engineers are developed in classrooms. Teachers should be held at the same level of esteem as the professions their own students will enter. Like teaching, each of those respected professions requires extensive education and a license. That license conveys that a professional will meet and strive to exceed the standards in their field. Our children deserve nothing less from the teaching profession.

PEBC will continue to lead this conversation in the larger community.

Final: March 8, 2017

## **EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND TALKING POINTS FOR BOARD:**

Because Colorado is one of seven states that are constitutionally under local control, our education landscape is highly contextualized to districts and regions. Educator licensure is monitored by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), who report to the State Board of Education (SBE).

The Colorado Licensure Act of 1991 (2260.5-R-1.00) establishes the standards and criteria for the issuance of licenses and authorizations to teachers, special services providers, principals, and administrators. The Act calls for the State Board of Education to adopt rules for a three-tiered system of licensure for education personnel which includes an Initial License for entry-level educators, a Professional License for experienced educators, and a voluntary Master Certificate for outstanding educators.

PEBC is a Designated Agency that is authorized by the State Board of Education to work with the Colorado Department of Education to grant Initial licensure to residents through our Boettcher Teacher Residency (BTR). BTR is currently the largest clinical residency in Colorado. Thus, PEBC has a self-interest in promoting the necessity for licensure to remain a state-wide requirement. With its 35 year history of supporting educators in the field and retaining teachers in the profession, PEBC is uniquely situated to support licensure, and the teachers who pursue it, across the state.

The current conversation, which has been broached at the State Board of Education, could result in potential for districts, rather than the state, to determine the necessity of licensure for teachers. The issue presented itself because the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), (passed on 12.9.16), eliminates the federal definition of Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT). Previously, under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), states needed to ensure that teachers were highly qualified based upon: holding a bachelor's degree + full state certification, as defined by the state + demonstrated competency, as defined by the state, in each core academic subject that he or she taught.

In the scenario, which is under debate, there would be no quality control regarding teacher preparation in this state.

Local control is already honored in that in our current system districts may:  
1.) apply for waivers from licensure 2.) hire teachers whom they place on Emergency Certification while obtaining licensure through one of 50

alternative routes, including online options 3.) waive licensure entirely via a formal request to the SBE.

**Arguments For Supporting a Licensure System:** If we lower the bar and eliminate the requirement for licensure as a state, our inequities will not only persist, they will increase. The Colorado Equity Plan (2015) highlights the correlation between high poverty students and less effective teachers. Colorado defines equity gaps as schools in which high poverty, high minority, low growth and a high turnover rate exist. It is hypothesized that turnover rates are contributing to the existing equity gaps. TELL data indicates that teachers are more likely to leave if they feel unprepared to address the needs of their school population.

**Arguments For Supporting a Licensure System:** If we eliminate licensure in the state of Colorado we will effectively degrade the teaching profession. Currently, Stanford's Learning Policy Institute ranks Colorado's teacher attractiveness rating a 2 on a Likert scale of 1-5. Colorado's low attractiveness rating is based on the following factors: compensation, teacher turnover, working conditions, and qualifications. If we allow licensure to be eliminated, we are embarking on a potentially significant and detrimental path that will have even greater impacts on Colorado's economic and business climate as a whole.

**Arguments For Supporting a Licensure System:** If we elevate the profession, imagine whom we might attract to a high-status, high-compensation field? International models like Finland, Singapore and Shanghai achieve exemplary results in student achievement largely because they have created models of respecting and honoring teachers and the education profession.

**Arguments Against a Teacher Licensure System:** Charter associations, and some technical schools, will state that licensure is a barrier into the profession. Truth: charters already have waivers from the necessity of hiring licensed teachers. Fact: despite the waivers, 72% of Colorado's charter school teachers are licensed, according to the CDE's Equity Report. Inference: most charter schools see the value in hiring or developing a licensed teacher.

**Arguments Against a Teacher Licensure System:** Some rurals are asking for flexibility around requirements for licensure due to Colorado's teacher

shortage. The reality is that flexibility already exists in Colorado because any district can hire whoever they want, place the employee on emergency certification, and ask them to complete one of the 50 alternative licensure programs in the state. Some rural districts have also asked for and received waivers from licensure from the SBE.

**According to Colorado Department of Higher Education:**

**Orgs Against Licensure:**

Colorado Rural Alliance

Colorado BOCES Association (with modification that individuals earn an alt certification after 1 year)

East Central BOCES (with modification that individuals earn an alt certification after 1 year)

**No Position:**

Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE)

Colorado Department of Education (CDE)

Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE)

**Orgs For Licensure:**

CEA

Stand For Children (informal confirmation)

**PEBC's GUIDING PRINCIPLES** that apply to licensure debate:

1. We are developing great educators. **When teachers embark on a licensure pathway, they become equipped with the tools they need in order to positively impact outcomes for all students.**
2. We are improving student growth and success. **When teachers are supported through a trajectory of licensure, teachers obtain skills to navigate the complexity of human learning and achieve greater results relative to student growth and holistic success.**
3. We are elevating the teaching profession. **Licensure ensures that our teachers have the efficacy to discern and implement appropriate skills that collectively form a composite of a highly-regarded profession.**
4. We are influencing and empowering systems change. **Through the licensure process, educators receive access to current research and powerful pedagogy in order to engage and motivate students to become highly skilled and confident adults.**
5. We are recognized as a leader in the education profession. **A licensed educator denotes to parents and stakeholders that they may be assured that the professional who is trusted with a child's learning is ready to**

take on the responsibility of the development and well-being of our children – our future.

6. We are operating with a financially sustainable business model. Licensure allows a structure for integrating PEBC's principles and making them visible to the community at large – locally and nationally. PEBC's financial sustainability supports the licensure system that is a critical service to the creation of Colorado's workforce and economic development.

Approved: March 8, 2017