

## **PEPSC Licensure Reform Subcommittee Guiding Principles**

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### **BACKGROUND**

Since 2018, the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable has worked to create the foundation for a new approach to teacher licensure and professional career pathways – one that aims to address the state of North Carolina’s teacher shortage and to increase every student’s access to quality education.

This issue has proven to be incredibly complex, and we are excited to see great minds from across the industry collaborate to develop a holistic approach that will replace North Carolina’s current teacher licensure system, which has resulted from years of short-term fixes.

As the foundation of this work begins to expand into a full-fledged legislative proposal, it is important for subcommittees to agree on our charge and a series of principles that will guide our work together. The following guiding principles are what inspired the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable’s work from the beginning, and we agree to stay on this path moving forward.

As the work begins and ideas begin to build off of one another, subcommittee members will refer to these guiding principles to ensure that the goals of this work remain in the forefront as we create pathways for success for educators of today and tomorrow.

### **PEPSC’s CHARGE**

For PEPSC’s diverse subcommittee members to collaborate and develop an operational model that reflects the Education Human Capital Roundtable’s vision and framework and submit a full policy proposal to the North Carolina State Board of Education. The proposal should reimagine teachers’ pathways, supports, licensure and incentives in a way that:

- **INVITES** a more diverse population into the profession;
- **OFFERS** individual advancement and growth opportunities;
- **ENCOURAGES** the best teachers to lead from the classroom; and
- **PROVIDES** fair compensation that grows as teachers expand their professional impact.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- **This plan is based on output-driven success.**

Currently, an educator’s license is based on measures of time and effort spent before entering the classroom. We will create a system that focuses on measuring an educator’s success based on proven skills, competencies, instructional capabilities, and student output in the classroom. The goal is to

hold all teachers to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways.

- **Increasing autonomy for teachers is key to providing quality education.**

More and more teachers are leaving the classroom and the profession due to a lack of opportunity for growth. It is important to allow teaching professionals the opportunity to mold their careers and grow within their role in the classroom. This way, we keep quality teachers in the classroom and encourage other great educators to enter the profession.

- **It is important to provide a menu of options.**

The current system has become overly complicated and rigid. Even if those interested in the profession can understand what they need to do to navigate the licensure system, many of the barriers to entry, such as the current testing measures, tend to discourage those who might actually thrive in the classroom and hinders greater diversity among educators in the field. We must offer options that sustain the rigor and quality of the profession yet provide flexibility to the diverse needs of teachers.

- **We will expand pathways into the teaching profession, while also streamlining them through a comprehensible licensure process.**

It is our intention to raise the standards for educators entering and progressing in the profession by reducing unnecessary barriers to entry, providing exit options for those who decide to use them, and encouraging excellent teachers to remain in the classroom where they have firsthand impact on students' success. This is how we safeguard a quality educational experience for future generations.

- **Providing standardized and robust teacher supports and a new compensation policy is vital to increasing the diversity and equity of the profession.**

The teaching profession struggles to attract and retain new generations of teachers, much less diverse candidates. To do this better, the framework is dependent upon instilling new quality supports for all early-career teachers and a restructured, professional pay scale that rewards hard work, increased mastery, and positive student outcomes.

- **This is a collaborative effort.**

This vision has been years in the making, but it is far from complete. PEPSC's ability to consult numerous stakeholders from across the education industry

can help complete the proposal and bring it to life. There are a number of details that are waiting to be developed. We need your input to fulfill this vision.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION HUMAN CAPITAL ROUNDTABLE'S WORK**

### **» What is the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**

- The NC Education Human Capital Roundtable is a multi-sector coalition of North Carolina education leaders that has worked diligently since 2018 to address the teacher shortage in North Carolina and to create NC pathways to excellence for teaching professionals.

### **» Who is part of the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**

- The Roundtable comprises educators, school and district leaders, advocacy groups, four state education agencies, and representatives from the Professional Educator Preparation Standards Commission and the State Board of Education.

### **» Who leads the Roundtable?**

- By design, there is no chair or designated leader of the Roundtable. It is a collaborative effort.

### **» What's the mission of the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**

- The Roundtable is working to modernize the teacher licensure process in a way that fairly supports and encourages continuous improvement of existing teachers, and increases the quality, quantity and diversity of new teacher candidates.
- The Roundtable is gathering input and feedback from stakeholders across North Carolina including school, district and state leaders, teachers, educator preparation programs, and researchers in education.

### **» What is the Southern Regional Education Board's role in the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**

- SREB promotes holistic changes to end teacher shortages and is working to help several states achieve this, including North Carolina through the Roundtable process.
- SREB supports the Roundtable's vision by facilitating open dialogue and providing research and best practices from other states.

### **» How was it determined which organizations and individuals were part of the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**

- SREB convened the Roundtable and recommended which organizations should be represented. The leaders of each recommended organization assigned a designee to be an acting member of the group.
- SREB intentionally kept the group small to maximize productivity, creativity and candor. SREB designed the meetings to be closed for the same reason.

### **» How does the existing teacher licensure system in North Carolina work?**

- As a result of decades of short-term fixes, North Carolina's current teacher licensure system has become overly complex and offers a combination of license options with no clear indication of how they all work together.
- The current licensure system relies solely

on educator preparation and exams to grant candidates a license. The envisioned model expands the routes by which a candidate may become licensed.

» **What is the problem with North Carolina's current licensure system?**

- The complex path to become a teacher in North Carolina and the lack of opportunities to advance as a professional discourages talented teachers from entering and staying in the classroom.
- A pathway for professional growth is currently absent in North Carolina's teaching profession without leaving the classroom to pursue administration roles.
- These challenges have created a flat expanse with no opportunity for growth or advancement for teachers, contributing to the growing teacher shortage in North Carolina.

» **How does this envisioned system fill the gaps of the current policy approach to education in North Carolina?**

- Licensure, professional pathways, compensation, and professional support are currently siloed in North Carolina policies and programs. To be more effective, they should be integrated into educators' experience as they grow in their profession.
- A pathway for substantial, compensated professional growth is also currently absent in North Carolina's teaching profession without leaving the classroom to pursue administration roles. Some limited roles exist in individual school districts, but a statewide model will help expand those roles.
- Teachers are the difference-makers for students' success. The single best thing we can do to improve education in North Carolina is focus on keeping great teachers

in the classroom and encouraging more to enter the profession.

- The Roundtable's vision is for North Carolina to bolster its ability to attract, develop and reward the best educators by implementing clear, sequential pathways for NC teaching professionals to enter and progress in the profession.

» **What outcomes should we expect to see that the current system isn't yielding?**

- Research shows that teachers are the difference-makers for student success.
- There is no data to suggest that the current pathways for teachers actually create better outcomes and significant evidence that they repel high-quality candidates and beginning teachers.
- The new envisioned system is outcome-focused with embedded professional support systems and compensated professional pathways. It holds all teachers to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways — not just passing an exam.
- Lack of adequate professional development or support is often a top-five reason teachers leave the profession (Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research, 2019) and yet — even when available — the type of professional development most often provided to teachers is generally ineffective. The envisioned system would provide teachers with personalized professional advancement opportunities.
- As with any profession, teachers want to see that there are achievable career opportunities where they can be compensated for doing more or better work. The current one-size-fits all system does not provide any meaningful career paths.
- Dozens of school districts have already created or are working to create advanced

teaching roles that extend the reach of their best teachers. Where it is implemented well, student achievement is higher, proving it is as good for students as it is for educators. This new system will more firmly establish the gold standard for those career opportunities, allowing other districts to move forward faster as they choose to implement this strategy.

**» Does North Carolina stand to benefit economically from a system like the one envisioned?**

- The Roundtable’s proposed reform is not only important for our teachers and our students but also for North Carolina’s education system and economy as a whole, as teaching is the profession that makes all other professions possible.
- The envisioned system has the potential to put North Carolina at the forefront of education innovation in the United States and to make the education sector a strong foundational element of our state’s economy.

**» How will the envisioned system help ensure more high-quality teachers in the classroom?**

- The Roundtable wants to work together on a solution that’s more coherent, focuses on teacher professional growth and rewards teacher effectiveness — all in the service of supporting students.
- The new envisioned system is outcome-focused. It holds all teachers to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways — not just passing an exam.
- The envisioned system provides state-funded professional advancement dollars to help support personalized professional growth for teachers.
- The envisioned system provides ways for

highly effective teachers to achieve advanced credentials based on effectiveness that come with greater compensation, and opportunities to lead and specialize — while also allowing them to continue teaching students. The plan also provides clear exit ramps for teachers not meeting expectations.

**» How will the envisioned system help elevate teaching as a profession?**

- The current path to becoming a teacher and developing that craft has not kept up with other high-skill professions.
- The Roundtable has begun developing a vision for the future, NC Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals, which is intended to revitalize teachers’ licensure and professional career paths in a way that: invites a more diverse population into the profession and fills critical vacancies with highly qualified candidates; better measures teacher effectiveness, providing better outcomes for students; treats teachers as professionals, offering compensated advancement and personalized professional growth opportunities in the classroom.