

MILESTONES

Navigating Licensure Updates — Key Takeaways

Licensure in a Post-Waiver World · 2026 Arkansas Department of Education Summit



Bottom line: Waivers are gone. Every unlicensed teacher of record now needs a named, monitored plan to full licensure — and most are already in classrooms, partway through the pipeline. A completion-focused approach moves them across the finish line.

1 · THE NEW LEGAL LANDSCAPE

- **Act 304 of 2025:** Beginning 2025–26, licensure waivers are no longer available to public school districts. It replaces Act 1240 waivers, School of Innovation waivers, and Emergency Teaching Permits (ETPs).
- **LEARNS Act (Acts 2023, No. 237):** Reshaped how educators are recruited, prepared, and supported — including yearlong residencies (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2901 et seq.).
- **Tiered licensure system:** Permits, provisional, standard, and advanced licenses (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-402(c); 6 CAR pt. 180). The standard license is renewable and valid five years (6 CAR § 180-501).
- **Right to Read Act (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-429):** Science-of-reading knowledge is now built into licensure. First-time K–6 and special education K–12 candidates must pass a stand-alone science-of-reading assessment.
- **Guidance:** Commissioner's Memo LIC-25-011, "Teacher Licensure Plans for 2025–2026," is the operational playbook districts use to implement Act 304.

2 · A COMPLETION-FOCUSED STRATEGY

- **Start with who is already here:** Focus first on educators teaching under Teacher Licensure Plans and provisional licenses.
- **Map every candidate to a named pathway** with a clear finish line (6 CAR pt. 180).
- **Remove friction at the stall points:** testing, clinical placement, and paperwork.
- **Pair every candidate with a trained mentor** and structured support (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2902).
- **Track progress against milestones,** not just enrollment — success is a full standard license, earned on time.

3 · PROGRESS POINTS TO FULL LICENSURE

- 1 Entry** — Admission to an approved program/pathway; provisional license issued (6 CAR § 180-301; § 6-17-409).
- 2 Background clearance** — Criminal records + Child Maltreatment Central Registry checks (§ 6-17-410).
- 3 Testing** — Content, pedagogy, and the science-of-reading assessment (§ 6-17-402(c)(2)).
- 4 Clinical experience** — Supervised practice, culminating in the year-long residency (§ 6-17-409(c)(2)).
- 5 Full licensure** — Standard license issued; renewable for five years (6 CAR § 180-501).

Note: Alternative programs add a step — EPP recommendation for a provisional license before full licensure. Aspiring Teachers meeting all Aspiring Teacher Permit requirements may serve as teacher of record at full salary.

4 · THE THREE LICENSURE PLANS

One framework, three audiences — each a structured, monitored route to full licensure.

TLP

Teacher Licensure Plan

For unlicensed teachers. The primary replacement for waivers and ETPs under Act 304.

ALP

Additional Licensure Plan

For licensed teachers teaching out of area, while completing added program requirements for a new content area.

ALCP

Administrator Licensure Completion Plan

For licensed teachers serving as administrators, while completing administrator licensure requirements.

5 · TEACHER LICENSURE PLAN (TLP) ESSENTIALS

- **Approved annually** by the DESE Licensure Office; granted to both the individual and the district.
- **Three-year maximum** total — regardless of subject area or district. Cannot be held if the applicant has ever held a provisional license.
- **District monitors progress** toward full licensure and notifies DESE each year that the individual is still employed. After year three, the individual must be eligible for a provisional license.
- **Tier 1 (AQT):** Individuals who ARE Arkansas Qualified Teachers get up to three years.
- **Tier 2 (not yet AQT):** A temporary 2025–26 status only — unavailable moving forward.

Time deductions: In special education, no more than three years total under any exception/provisional license (retroactive under IDEA). Years on a Long-Term Substitute (SpEd) or an Emergency Teaching Permit are deducted from the three-year maximum.

6 · OTHER PATHWAYS & EXCEPTIONS

Routes to a standard license

- **Traditional** — bachelor's-level prep at an IHE (6 CAR § 180-302).
- **Alternative programs** — for degree-holders entering teaching (§ 6-17-409).
- **Registered Apprentice** — work-based, mentored routes.
- **National programs** — Teach For America, Arkansas Teacher Corps.
- **MAT** — six-hour rule: provisional-eligible after six hours (except SpEd).
- **Reciprocity** — for educators licensed in other states (§ 6-17-403).

Work-based & exceptions

- **PPTL** — Provisional Professional Teaching License: 3-yr license; 3+ years verified content-area work experience.
- **HQP** — Highly Qualified Professor: master's + 3 years as teacher of record at an accredited IHE.
- **ATP** — Aspiring Teacher Permit: teacher of record during a yearlong residency; superintendent applies before the teacher starts.
- **LTS** — Long-Term Substitute: only for leave/medical/catastrophic/deployment; not to fill a true vacancy.
- **ETL** — Effective Teacher Licensure: teach one grade above/below the evaluated grade.

7 · ACTION STEPS & THE DISTRICT PORTAL

District & school leaders

- Audit every permit and provisional teacher; map each to a completion plan.
- Protect time and assign trained mentors for residents and provisional teachers.
- Build “grow-your-own” partnerships with preparation providers.
- Check “Ethics Violations” in LEA Insights before hiring.

The District Portal (AELS)

- TLPs, ALPs, ATPs, and ALCPs are requested through the District Portal.
- **Educator Search** — find an individual and add an exception or plan request.
- **District Exception Plans** — view all active plans and statuses.
- **Statuses:** Unsubmitted · Processing · Approved · District Action Required.

Questions? Office of Educator Preparation & Licensure · Arkansas Department of Education

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