| **Virginia Board of Education Agenda Item** | **Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia** |
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# Agenda Item: Q

## Date: October 17, 2019

### Title: Written Report from the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure's Recommendations for the Use of Microcredentials for Licensure in Response to Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217 ( 2019 General Assembly)

#### Presenter: Mrs. Patty S. Pitts, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Licensure

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## Purpose of Presentation:

Action required by state or federal law or regulation.

**Executive Summary:**   
Attached is the document, Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure's Recommendations for the Use of Microcredentials for Licensure in Response to Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217 of the 2019 General Assembly**.** This initiative supports the Board of Education’s Comprehensive Plan to recruit, develop, and retain well prepared and skilled teachers.

The 2019 Virginia General Assembly passed identical bills, Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217, which allow the Virginia Department of Education to establish a microcredential program that permits a Virginia teacher who holds a renewable or provisional license or an individual who participates in an alternate route to licensure to complete additional coursework and earn microcredentials in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) endorsement areas, including computer science. The bills required that the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) convene a workgroup to determine how such microcredentials could be used to award add-on endorsements and certifications for teachers in STEM endorsement areas, including computer science. The legislation noted that the work to complete a microcredential could be offered in person or in a blended format of in-person and online instruction. Any microcredential that does not contribute to an endorsement is eligible for consideration toward license renewal.

A workgroup on microcredentials convened on behalf of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) in Henrico County, Virginia, on September 9, 2019. Members of the workgroup included teachers, school and central office administrators, Department of Education staff, and representatives from professional organizations, higher education, and CodeVA, an organization that provides computer science training to teachers in Virginia.

The Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure met on September 23, 2019, to review the workgroup’s recommendations. The Advisory Board unanimously approved the workgroup’s recommendations, with some minor technical edits. The following recommendations are submitted to the Board of Education for its consideration:

1. **Clarify Virginia license renewal language about the use of microcredentials for professional development points.**
2. **Consider microcredentials as a component of an alternate route to licensure or a teacher preparation program submitted to the Virginia Board of Education for approval.**
3. **Allow microcredentials, regardless of delivery modality to be considered for use by educators.**
4. **Allow the opportunity to pilot the development, use, and evaluation of microcredentials for Virginia educators in accordance with Board of Education guidelines.**

## Action Requested:

No action requested.

## Superintendent’s Recommendation:

## The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education receive the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure's recommendations for the use of microcredentials for licensure in response to Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217 of the 2019 General Assembly.

## Previous Review or Action:

No previous review or action.

Background Information and Statutory Authority:   
Attached is the document, Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure's Recommendations for the Use of Microcredentials for Licensure in Response to Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217 of the 2019 General Assembly.

The 2019 Virginia General Assembly passed identical bills, Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217, which allow the Virginia Department of Education to establish a microcredential program that permits a Virginia teacher who holds a renewable or provisional license or an individual who participates in an alternate route to licensure to complete additional coursework and earn microcredentials in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) endorsement areas, including computer science. The bills required that the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) convene a workgroup to determine how such microcredentials could be used to award add-on endorsements and certifications for teachers in STEM endorsement areas, including computer science. The legislation noted that the work to complete a microcredential could be offered in person or in a blended format of in-person and online instruction. Any microcredential that does not contribute to an endorsement is eligible for consideration toward license renewal.

| Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217 |
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| **CHAPTER 227**  *An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered* [***22.1-299.7***](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-299.7)*, relating to the Department of Education; establishment of a microcredential program.*  Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:  1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered [**22.1-299.7**](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-299.7) as follows:  *§* [***22.1-299.7***](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-299.7)*. Microcredential program; certain STEM subjects.*  *A. The Department of Education may establish a microcredential program for the purpose of permitting any public elementary or secondary school teacher who holds a renewable or provisional license or any individual who participates in any alternate route to licensure program to complete additional coursework and earn microcredentials in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) endorsement areas, including computer science, for which there is a high need for additional qualified teachers.*  *B. The Department of Education shall* *direct the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure to convene a workgroup including pertinent education stakeholders* *to determine how any microcredential awarded pursuant to any microcredential program established pursuant to subsection A will be used to award add-on endorsements and certifications for teachers in STEM*  *endorsement areas, including computer science, for which there is a high need for additional qualified teachers.*  *C. Any course offered through any microcredential program established pursuant to subsection A shall be offered in-person or in a blended format of in-person and online instruction.*  *D.* *Any teacher who holds a renewable license and who participates, through any microcredential program offered pursuant to subsection A, in courses that do not contribute to an endorsement is eligible for professional development points toward renewal of his license for the number of in-person hours of coursework completed, upon providing a certificate of such participation from the course provider.* |

A workgroup on microcredentials convened on behalf of the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure (ABTEL) in Henrico County, Virginia, on September 9, 2019. Members of the workgroup included teachers, school and central office administrators, Department of Education staff, and representatives from professional organizations, higher education, and CodeVA, an organization that provides computer science training to teachers in Virginia. Presentations included:

* A review of research on microcredentials and their use in K-12 education;
* An overview of Radford University’s Appalachian Support for Specialized Education Training (ASSET) program, which delivers self-paced and competency-based online professional development sessions for K-12 educators that may result in microcredentials; and
* Information about a partnership currently under development between Old Dominion University and CodeVA to offer microcredentials to K-12 teachers.

The discussion of the workgroup on microcredentials produced recommendations related to the development and use of microcredentials. The areas of recommendation address both existing policies and future considerations.

The Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure met on September 23, 2019, to review the workgroup’s recommendations. The Advisory Board unanimously approved the workgroup’s recommendations, with some minor technical edits. The following recommendations are submitted to the Board of Education for consideration:

1. **Clarify Virginia license renewal language about the use of microcredentials for professional development points.**

There are provisions in the *Virginia Licensure Renewal Manual* (Virginia Department of Education, 2019) whereby a teacher can use microcredentials to earn professional development points toward license renewal. Option 8, Professional Development Activities, encourages local employing education agencies “to design staff development activities . . . to enhance professional performance and advance the goals of the employing local agency. Noncollege credit activities previously sponsored by educational agencies are now included in several of the options, especially Option 8.” (Virginia Department of Education, 2019)

Effective July 1, 2018, renewable teaching licenses are issued for 10 years. Prior to that date, they were issued for five years. Individuals who currently hold a five-year license must earn 180 professional development points for license renewal, with one clock/contact hour counting as one point. Professional development activities must meet the following criteria to be used for license renewal:

* + Must be a **minimum of five hours per activity**. The five hours do not have to be consecutive
  + Must have prior approval from the chief executive officer or designee if the license holder is employed in a Virginia educational agency. Prior approval for employing educational agency professional development activity is a commitment that professional development points will be awarded for the activity. If job-related leave is being requested, the license holder must follow the guidelines in the personnel handbook of the employing agency.

**Suggested Action:**

Add language based on the Code of Virginia (*§* [***22.1-299.7***](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-299.7)*. Microcredential program; certain STEM subjects.)* to the *Virginia Licensure Renewal Manual* to make it clear that microcredentials can be used to earn professional development points for license renewal.

1. **Consider microcredentials as a component of an alternate route to licensure or a teacher preparation program submitted to the Virginia Board of Education for approval.**

The Virginia Board of Education must approve all teacher preparation programs. Additionally, the 2019 Virginia General Assembly approved House Bill 2486 that required the Board of Education to develop guidelines that establish a process to permit a school board or any organization sponsored by a school board to petition the Board for approval of an alternate route to licensure that may be used to meet the requirements for a provisional or renewable license or any endorsement.

**Suggested Action:**

Consider including microcredentials in programs seeking approval if they address the content and expertise required in the approved program competencies set forth in the Board of Education’s regulations.

1. **Allow microcredentials, regardless of delivery modality to be considered for use by educators.**

The language approved by the 2019 Virginia General Assembly in Senate Bill 1419 and House Bill 2217 appears to require that microcredentials for teachers may be offered only in person or in a blended format of in-person and online instruction.

*§* [***22.1-299.7***](http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-299.7)*. Microcredential program; certain STEM subjects.*

*…C. Any course offered through any microcredential program established pursuant to subsection A shall be offered in-person or in a blended format of in-person and online instruction.*

However, many microcredential are offered solely online, and the language in the *Code of Virginia* should reflect this provision.

**Suggested Action:**

Add language to make it clear that microcredentials can include completely online instruction in addition to in-person or in a blended format.

1. **Allow the opportunity to pilot the development, use, and evaluation of microcredentials for Virginia educators in accordance with Board of Education guidelines.**

Many questions about the use of microcredentials for teachers exist, especially given the emerging nature of their development and use. One or more microcredential pilots, especially conducted by colleges, universities, or organizations in Virginia that have recognized success in teacher preparation and professional development, would help to respond to some of these questions including the interest of teachers in pursuing microcredentials, their effectiveness in providing professional development in areas of need, and their potential role in teacher licensure and renewal. Such work also may provide insight into how higher education views the use of microcredentials as an element of programs, which may assist with the calibration of content and/or skills addressed by microcredentials with the current teacher licensure requirements in Virginia.

**Suggested Action:**

Allow a collaboration of stakeholders (Department of Education/State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV)/colleges and universities/school divisions/professional organizations) to pilot the development, use, and evaluation of microcredentials for Virginia educators.

Timetable for Further Review/Action:

No further action required.   
  
**Impact on Fiscal and Human Resources:**

The administrative impact will be absorbed within existing resources.