

# Policy to Practice Brief

NC Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals

*Input from the Implementers: District Leaders, Principals, School Board Members, and Educator Preparation Programs*



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## Background

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) of the State Board of Education are working on a new teacher licensure pathways proposal, *Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals (Model)*. This proposal, if enacted, would restructure the state's system of teacher licensure and the various pathways and compensation approaches, affecting every district, school, teacher, and student. This new draft Model stems from research and recommendations from the North Carolina Education Human Capital Roundtable, and subcommittees composed of members from PEPSC. In December 2021, NCDPI staff worked to condense the recommendations of the subcommittee into a draft proposal. NCDPI then presented this draft Model to PEPSC in March 2022, and the State Board of Education in April 2022. This proposed draft Model would shift away from the current licensure and compensation Model that rewards longevity, and shift towards a system in which educators can reach more advanced levels and receive higher pay based on merit. Since it was unveiled in April, the draft Model has received mixed responses from educators and educational leaders across the state.

### **Approach**

During the last weeks of May and the beginning of June, the Public School Forum conducted a series of focus groups to collect, synthesize, and share representative feedback from principals, district leaders (including Human Resources Directors and Superintendents), Educator Preparation Programs, boards of education, and others who will be impacted by or responsible for the implementation of the proposed *Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals Model*. As a nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocating for public education across the

state, the Forum felt that it was essential to hear from local leaders while this plan is still in draft form. Facilitators of the focus groups included: Mary Ann Wolf, PhD; Lauren Fox, PhD; Kathy Spencer, EdD; and Elizabeth Paul. The information in this brief is designed to provide input on the developing proposal to PEPSC, its subcommittees, and its members; the State Board of Education; the NCDPI; and stakeholders across NC who may be interested in engaging further in this work.

The key questions about *Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals* to guide the focus group discussions included:

- [What do you like?](#)
- [What challenges do you see?](#)
- [What questions do you have?](#)
- [What additional resources will you need to implement this Model?](#)
- [How do we fix or change the Model to address the challenges?](#)

The Forum conducted a series of seven focus groups from May 19 through June 2, 2022, with the following key stakeholders:

- District Leaders and Superintendents (3)
- Educator Preparation Programs (1)
- Principals (2)
- School Board Members (1)

One focus group was held in person, and the remaining 6 were held virtually via Zoom. Each focus group was scheduled for 1.5 hours and included a brief overview of the Model. The Forum provided each participant with a [video introduction with graphics](#) developed by DPI with Tom Tomberlin explaining the video and a [graphic organizer](#) to help participants organize their thoughts about the draft Model.

**Over 120 people** from **57 counties** participated in the focus groups, and represented every region of the state, as well as rural, suburban, and urban districts.

### Overview

The district and school leaders, school board members, and education preparation program representatives came to the focus groups to learn and share their perspectives and questions. The large response demonstrates the interest in providing input on the proposed Teacher Licensure Pathways.

The school and district leaders and educator preparation program representatives expressed their concern and their hopes for this new approach. Everyone reiterated that they are committed to growing the capacity to ensure that every child has access to high quality and well-prepared educators and to alleviating the challenges. The time dedicated to watch the

video, prepare their feedback, and participate in the focus groups indicates the sincere dedication that these school and district leaders and educator preparation program representatives have to students and teachers. While local context is represented to ensure feasibility of implementation, the discussion also included consideration of the statewide potential and challenges.

The information below summarizes the findings and recommendations from the participants. Several themes emerged in nearly every aspect of the discussion. **One critical piece is to consider components of implementation within the policy where possible, especially where implementation procedures are critical and need to be addressed systemically and consistently. One example of this is how current educators will fit and transition into the new Teacher Licensure Pathways. Another example is to ensure that human and fiscal resources are provided for implementation at the state, district, and school levels and the educator preparation programs.**

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## Positive Aspects of the Draft Model: What Do Participants Like?

Participants indicated several positive aspects of the proposed Teacher Licensure Pathways, including these five primary areas:

### **1. Opportunities for Growth and Career Advancement**

Implementers appreciate the opportunities for growth and career advancement built into the Model. They also liked the incentives and advanced roles. They appreciate the recognition of excellence and the competency-based approach. The participants see value in multiple and optional measures for their advancement.

### **2. Alternative Entry Points and Pathways**

Participants in school and district leadership roles appreciate the opportunity for people to enter the teaching workforce at multiple different points and on varying pathways. Specifically, they believe the opportunities for TAs to become teachers while working in the school will be advantageous for the teacher pipeline and for students. They also see that funding apprenticeship opportunities will increase access to becoming a teacher and could ultimately increase the number of teacher candidates.

### **3. Potential for Higher Compensation and Higher Starting Salary**

Several implementers like the higher compensation, especially for beginning teachers. This did vary by district, as many have increased compensation for TAs, data managers, and others who may be interested in the apprenticeship or early licensure levels. This will make the compensation indicated on the draft Model less enticing.

Overall, the districts could see value in the new state level salaries and the potential for teachers to be compensated for Advanced Teaching Roles. They also like the quicker advancement on the salary scale.

#### **4. Access to Professional Advancement Funds**

Many future implementers expressed the importance of the professional advancement funds for the early licensure steps. They believe this could help with gaining licensure and also provide flexibility for candidates.

#### **5. Opportunities for Co-Teaching and Mentorships**

The participants believe that co-teaching and mentorships could lead to stronger support for early career educators and to more effective teaching overall. They see the importance and value of early career educators having this support.

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### **Concerns or Challenges: What Challenges Do Participants See?**

Participants expressed many key areas for concern. While all of these categories represent multiple challenges expressed, these are the nine main categories of concerns from our participants:

#### **1. Complexity of Approach**

Participants overwhelmingly expressed concern over the complexity of the Teacher Licensure Pathways Model and the potential complications of implementation. They cited that many of the steps appeared redundant and re-named existing steps in the current teacher licensure process. Participants stated that one of their main concerns with the current licensure Model was its complexity, and that this Teacher Licensure Pathways Model did not address these concerns, and instead made it more difficult to understand.

#### **2. Human Capacity and Fiscal Resources Required for Implementation**

Participants had many concerns about the lack of human capital and fiscal feasibility of this Model from the school, district, and state levels. One major concern cited by district leaders, principals, and EPPs alike was the ability to find enough mentors to provide meaningful and productive mentor/mentee relationships. District leaders who worked in human resources mentioned that it is already difficult to find high-quality licensure specialists and that licensing takes time; they believed that both of these concerns with the current process were not solved with the proposed Teacher Licensure Pathways. Many participants feared that if additional positions were required, that low-wealth localities would not have the means to pay for these positions. Implementers cited that it was not uncommon for new programs and policies to be passed by the state, but funded by the localities, creating a burden for low-wealth districts. Specifically, participants were concerned about the possibility of their localities needing to match any funding put forth by the state for Advanced Teacher positions, or training for educators entering the field without a teaching degree. Also at the district level, participants worried that school administrator turnover was already high in some districts, and that this proposed Model did not solve the shortage of administrators created by allotment caps. Implementers at all levels raised concerns about the ability of the state and the Department of Public Instruction to keep up with the complex levels in the new proposed Model.

#### **3. Lack of Clarity and Issues with the Evaluation Process**

Implementors were concerned about the evaluation process for gaining advanced rankings,

including how effectiveness would be defined and measured. Many cited that using test scores and performance would not be an accurate or equitable measure of effectiveness, and that a majority of educators in the state do not have EVAAS scores. The inclusion of a peer and student evaluation was also challenged by participants who were concerned about inter-rater reliability and possibly subjective results from evaluators who have not received proper training. Finally, many participants expressed concerns about tying teacher pay and rankings to student performance.

#### **4. Compensation and Recruitment**

While some aspects of compensation stated in this Model were appreciated by participants, many still expressed concerns that the state was not compensating educators and apprentice teachers enough. Specifically, participants cited the salary of \$30,000 a year for an apprentice teacher to be insufficient in many parts of the state, especially urban areas where the cost of living is higher. Many felt that while seeing increased salaries for some positions was beneficial, that these salaries were still not competitive with other fields requiring similar levels of education, and would not be attractive enough to recruit people to enter the field. This concern was also echoed with administrator pay, which could be decreased in some areas of the state according to this Model. Another concern was the lack of acknowledgement in pay for advanced degrees, National Boards certification, or years of experience. Additionally, there are 5-year periods where pay would plateau, offering little incentive or encouragement for educators during those years. This Model also does not provide a clear incentive to recruit teachers from other states to work in North Carolina, as the licensure and standardization process appears too complex.

#### **5. Lack of License IV Educators/Advanced Teacher Roles Needed for Model to Work**

Concerns were expressed about the challenges of having enough Advanced Teachers or Level IV educators to meet the needs of the mentorship programs. Additionally, there were concerns about engaging faculty in participating in a mentorship program that would require additional work without receiving additional compensation. Participants stated that these Level IV and Advanced Teachers were typically already leaders in their districts that were helping to lead other extracurricular activities or sitting on school or district committees, and would not have additional time for a mentorship program.

#### **6. Ability to Pay for Locally-funded Positions**

Many districts have positions that are funded locally in addition to state-funded allocations. The number of roles and which positions vary widely across districts. If this Model is implemented, districts will need to figure out how to incur the same raises and processes for their locally-funded roles. Districts must request the additional funding from the County Commissioners in their budget process, and the funding may or may not be available for them. This could require them to cut positions that support students and/or educators.

#### **7. Potential Equity Concerns**

Under this Model, there is no incentive for Advanced Teachers to work with higher-need students and classrooms, and some participants feared that the proposed Pathways Model would discourage educators from working with more high-need students. Schools with majority students of color often have high turnover rates, resulting in very few if any educators with Advanced Teacher credentials. Schools and districts with limited funding for Advanced Teacher

roles will be at a disadvantage compared to other districts that may be able to afford more of these positions. Many participants who worked with Exceptional Needs populations also cited concerns about educators entering classrooms with special needs children who did not have the proper training or licensure. Low-wealth districts who may be struggling to find educators for EC classrooms will be looking towards those who may enter laterally, which is especially difficult for special education classrooms.

### **8. Potential to Create Competition among Educators**

Participants feared that the Advanced Teacher position could create the possibility for competition amongst educators if positions were limited. There was also a concern that some teachers may not qualify for an Advanced Teacher role at their school if roles were limited, but could qualify at another school, or in another district, furthering the dichotomy between low-wealth and high-wealth districts. Additionally, some low-wealth districts may not have any Advanced Teachers due to high teacher turnover, which would create issues in the Model for those who are supposed to observe and mentor incoming teachers. Participants also cited concerns with equal opportunities for advancement, stating that all educators should have the same opportunities to advance within their role.

### **9. Lack of Clear Role for EPPs**

Many participants from Educator Preparation Programs cited that they believed that this proposed licensure Model does not mention the role of EPPs and how they would support student teachers in gaining their licensure. The addition of multiple pathways for entry into the licensure process complicates the role of the EPP and how they are supposed to assist students. There are also concerns that teachers who do enter the profession through an EPP have to jump through additional hoops such as standardized testing to get to the same level as those who may enter laterally.

### **10. Pressure on Schools/Principals to Support or Drive the Licensure Process**

Participants expressed that it could be challenging to get educators licensed without having them go back to school. Some cited that this new proposed Pathways licensure plan could give increased power to principals, which could lead to issues of equity when selecting which teachers within the school will be Advanced Teachers. Additionally, there are concerns that without additional funding from the state, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement the new licensure Model.

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## Questions: What Questions Do Participants Have?

The foremost concern about the draft Model from our participants was lack of clarity. As a result, our focus groups had many questions about the Teacher Licensure Pathways. While their questions concerned various aspects of the Model, they can be consolidated into the following ten categories:

### **1. Evaluation/Assessment Components**

Many of the participants' questions stemmed from the evaluation and assessment aspects of



the new Pathways Model. One of the main questions surrounded the language of “effective” teaching, and how districts or the state would define effectiveness, and the metrics they would use to measure effectiveness. Other questions concerned the discrepancy in evaluation data between districts, and the difficulty of collecting this data in more high-need classrooms, such as ELL and EC classes. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding evaluation and assessment:

- a. How is effective teaching defined and measured?
- b. What is a good Model for teacher effectiveness to use to tie compensation to?
- c. What happens when districts make different decisions about evaluation data?
- d. Are there ways to meet benchmarks in classrooms that may struggle to show traditional growth (such as EC or ELL classes?)

### **2. Transition from Current Licensure System to New Pathways**

The second most common theme from the questions our participants asked were regarding how North Carolina’s current system of teacher licensure would transition into this newly proposed Model. Participants from Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) questioned how they would fit into this new Model, and how their licensure work would change with student teachers. Other questions from our implementers surrounded educators who do not work in traditional classrooms, and how currently held licenses would be converted to the new system. Participants in district leadership and Human Resources inquired about how this new Model would affect contracts. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding licensure transition:

- a. How does the current evaluation tool fit into this proposed Model?
- b. What is the role of Educator Preparation Programs?
- c. How will currently held licenses be converted to the new system?
- d. How does this affect the structure of contracts?
- e. What about educators who are not in the classroom (counselors, media center, etc.)?

### **3. Compensation**

Educator and administrator compensation is an ongoing concern, and one that we heard from every focus group. Our participants questioned whether a \$30,000 salary would be attractive enough to recruit apprentice teachers to enter the field. They also raised questions about Master’s pay, and pay increases for educators who were National Boards certified. Overall, many participants wondered how much the average teacher’s salary would increase, and whether or not it was beneficial to tie licensure to compensation. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding compensation:

- a. Is there a proposed salary schedule?
- b. How much would the average teacher’s pay increase?
- c. Why are National Boards certification and Master’s pay not included?
- d. Will a \$30,000 starting salary attract anyone?

### **4. Fiscal and Human Capacity**

Another theme from the questions from our participants was the capacity (both fiscally and with

staff) to accommodate this new Model. Many district leaders had questions about who would be responsible for the additional documentation required for keeping track of which educators were advancing levels, and how employees would be trained to complete peer reviews. Others inquired about the possibility of having to match state funds, and the data surrounding LEA's budget capacity for this change. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding fiscal and human capacity:

- a. Has there been an analysis on the impact of school districts' budgets?
- b. Will there be more steps/multiple paths for the finance department to track?
- c. What will the training process be for peer reviews?
- d. Will state funds need to match the levels, and will we have enough money to do that?
- e. Who would be responsible for the documentation for advancing positions?

### **5. Equity Among Districts and Schools/Incentive to Teach at High Need Schools**

Participants had concerns that a new Model that labeled teachers as "Advanced" in correlation with student performance would disincentivize educators from working in high-need classrooms. Many implementers asked how we would encourage higher ranking teachers to seek out low-wealth, high-need, or otherwise disadvantaged classrooms. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding equity:

- a. What will encourage a teacher in a low-growth school to seek higher licensure?
- b. How can this be a tool in increasing equity for teachers and students?
- c. How can we ensure that Advanced Teachers are seeking high-need schools and classrooms?
- d. Will this discourage teachers from taking on more challenging classrooms?

### **6. Allotments**

Participants had questions and concerns regarding allotments not only for Advanced Teacher positions, but also for additional staff that may be needed to accommodate change to the licensure process. Implementers also had questions about how this licensure Model would address allotment caps that limited the number of administrators each school can have. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding allotments:

- a. How do you figure out how many teachers each district can have that can be paid at higher levels?
- b. If someone reaches the advanced teacher: adult leadership role, where are they getting paid from?
- c. Is this an expandable pie or do you only have a few teachers able to access the higher salaries/advanced teaching roles?
- d. Is the apprentice teacher an allotment or a dollar amount?

### **7. Reciprocity and Transition from Another State/County/Subject**



One of the largest questions echoed by many participants was reciprocity from other states, across our state, and between districts. Many inquired how educators could maintain their status as Advanced Teachers if they were to move, and how those looking to move to North Carolina to teach would fit into this new licensure Model. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding reciprocity:

- a. If educators switched to a different content area, would they have to start from the beginning?
- b. How do teachers transferring in from out of state fit into this Model?
- c. How do levels transfer between counties?

### **8. Advanced Teaching Roles**

One of the largest changes to the current licensure Model is the addition of the Advanced Teacher position. Many of our participants had specific questions about this position, such as how many Advanced Teachers would be allowed in each school/district, how we would recognize those who deserve Advanced status but whom districts do not have the capacity to fund, and how this status would transfer to other schools or districts. Others inquired whether some districts would have enough Advanced Teachers to help with peer reviews and mentorship for beginning teachers. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding Advanced Teachers:

- a. How many Advanced Teachers can each school/district have?
- b. How do we acknowledge teachers who deserve the title of Advanced Teacher but the school/district is out of allotments/funding for this position?
- c. We can see how someone can become an advanced teaching role, but what if they are already there?
- d. The 5 hours/week is so important for beginning teachers, but who has the time to provide that support? Will we have enough people in advanced teaching roles to support the beginning teachers?
- e. What about equity across districts with numbers of Advanced Teachers/capability to pay for them?

### **9. Micro-Credentials**

Participants repeatedly had questions related to the micro-credential component of this Model. Many implementers wanted clarification on who would develop or vet the programs and how teachers would obtain them. Others had questions about the feasibility of providing quality micro-credentials across the state, especially in rural areas. The following questions were representative of those asked by participants regarding micro-credentials:

- a. Will the micro-credentials be provided by the district or the state? What if districts, especially rural ones, cannot afford to provide high-quality micro-credentials?
- b. How do we ensure that all micro-credentials are created equally and have quality assurance?
- c. Will teachers be able to select what fits their needs?

### 10. Charter Schools

Finally, our participants inquired about whether or not this new Model would apply to all public schools (including charter schools), or if it was limited to traditional public schools. The following question is representative of those asked by participants regarding charter schools:

- a. Does this apply to public charter schools?

## Resources: What Resources Do Participants Need to Implement the Draft Model?

Given the concerns and outstanding questions, participants identified a number of resources needed to successfully implement the Model. While the successful implementation would rely on a combination of these resources, the needs fell into the following seven categories:

### 1. Human Capacity at State, EPPs, Districts, and Schools for Implementation

Implementers at all levels suggested that a primary need is an increase in human capacity. The new Model requires increased time and logistical support from various stakeholders, including licensure specialists, teachers in advanced and leader roles, and HR departments. Some suggested that the state would need to allot more teacher leader positions to match the demand of teachers moving up the Model, along with district and school-based coaches. Others noted a need for greater logistical support for tracking new aspects of the Model, including managing teacher development funds, monitoring the fidelity of evaluations and student input, and potentially developing micro-credentials. Participants noted that current infrastructure does not adequately support the current Model; in smaller districts, it may take months to get people approved for licensure and DPI does not have a system to track who has what license. EPPs currently spend a significant amount of time advising school districts on the best pathway. The complexity of the draft Model demands changes to be made to the infrastructure in order to work.

### 2. Fiscal Resources

Across the board, participants mentioned that they would need increased financial resources to support the implementation of the new Model. Most notably, the need for increased human capacity will require districts and schools to create new positions. Districts will need more funding to support new positions in HR and licensure specialists, while schools will need funding for Advanced Teacher roles and additional coaches. Participants also noted that the increased time to comply with the Model will create a need for increased compensation for various roles.

### 3. Capacity Building for Inter-rater Reliability, Calibration, Peer Reviews, Adult Learning, and Mentoring

In order to ensure equity and inter-rater reliability, the various evaluation components will require capacity building and training at all levels. Principals and other district leaders will need

calibration with the evaluation instrument so that observations and evaluations are similar across classrooms and schools. Those who participate in peer reviews and mentoring will also need training to ensure consistency. Without the appropriate capacity building, the Model risks using subjective evaluations and observations to advance teachers.

#### **4. Clear and Consistent Observation/Evaluation Standards**

Participants identified a need for observation and evaluation standards, especially given that the process will be used for gaining advanced rankings. Districts and other leaders should have a clear definition of “effectiveness” and a consistent way to measure it across classrooms and schools. Creating clear standards and definitions is necessary to ensure that the process is as objective as possible and that there are not major differences between schools and districts.

#### **5. Advanced Teaching Roles Allotment(s)**

Districts will need adequate allotments for Advanced Teaching Roles to ensure that schools have enough human resources and capital to support the needs and mentoring of LI/II/III teachers. This is especially important for more rural and low-wealth districts that already have a limited number of experienced teachers

#### **6. Support for Educators**

The new Model will increase the strain and hours required for teachers, especially those in more advanced roles. Significant time is required to adequately observe, evaluate, and mentor others, not including the time necessary to be trained to serve in these capacities. These new responsibilities fall on top of the already-demanding schedule of being a classroom teacher or school leader. Participants suggested that educators will need increased support related to mental health. An increased number of teacher assistants would be necessary to provide educator support. Some suggested creating 12-month positions to account for the time necessary to implement the Model at its various levels, providing additional time for training, mentoring, and evaluations.

#### **7. High Quality, Effective Professional Learning and Micro-Credentials**

Implementers mentioned a need for access to high-quality professional development, including micro-credentials. Participants expressed concern about who would be in charge of creating or vetting micro-credentials and other professional learning opportunities. While some districts may have the ability and desire to create their own programs, others, especially rural and low-wealth districts, do not and would need to rely on the state to provide them. Having access to vetted opportunities and programs would help alleviate some of these inequities.

## Recommendations: How Would Participants Fix or Address Potential Challenges of the Draft Model?

### **1. Pilot the Program, Multiple Measures, and Other Aspects of the Model**

Participants believe that piloting the Model or parts of the Model will be critical to success. They recommend either moving forward with the early educator licensing pieces (Apprenticeship and Levels I & II) first or inviting five districts to pilot the entire Model before full implementation. While much of this feels urgent, they see the recruitment to fill vacancies as the most important shift in the licensure part of the Model.

### **2. Keep It Simple: Create a Clearer Path and Explanation**

While the draft Model addresses a very comprehensive approach to licensure and compensation, a central theme across the focus groups with school and district leaders, school board members, and EPP leaders was a recommendation to simplify the Model so that educators, implementers, potential candidates, and other stakeholders can understand what it is and how it supports the recruitment and retention of high quality and well-prepared educators. Participants also cited a lack of clarity on the origins of the Pathways proposal—many wanted more information about where the policy began, and if educators had been consulted in the drafting process.

Recommendations include reducing the number of licensure levels, using more education language instead of business language, and explaining how this helps current educators and where they enter the pathways. Some wondered if the Advanced Teaching Roles belonged on the licensure graphic since they are actually different roles in a school, rather than a licensure step.

### **3. Increase Human Capacity for Implementation (State, District, School, EPPs)**

Almost every participant noted in some way the human capacity needed and the current gaps in that human capacity to implement this Model. While this is defined as human capacity, it is important to note the funding required to increase human capacity.

At the school level, the human capacity needs include new roles themselves, such as funding or allotments for the Advanced Teaching Roles. For more rural districts, there is concern about the number of Level IV teacher or Advanced Teaching Roles available to conduct peer observations and other measurements identified in the current Model. The time required to conduct peer observations was also noted, as coverage will be required for those educators while they are engaged in the process. Many also recommended additional pay for these extra duties, even if they come with a new licensure level. In addition to the roles and individuals in those roles, the need to build the capacity to conduct peer observations, for inter-rater reliability among principals and other educators conducting the observations, and the understanding of effecting

teaching practices was also noted.

At the district level, leaders referenced the significant need in already strapped HR Departments (if a district has one). Recommendations about a licensure specialist and other roles to monitor and build capacity at the school level were noted. At least one district currently engaged in Advanced Teacher Roles shared the additional director roles at the district and coaching roles across schools that were added to implement the program. The observation and new metrics also need to be implemented in collaboration with Instructional Services or Curriculum & Instruction for fidelity and consistency. The multiple paths are seen as a positive, but also require additional support. This capacity building requires funding, as well. Many questions also emerged about the human capacity needs to implement micro-credentials, and most stakeholders had questions about how implementation and the responsibility for micro-credentials would be determined.

Finally, EPPs and DPI play important roles in this work. EPPs are a critical aspect of this work and will likely need licensure or liaison support so that they can coordinate effectively on the new Model with districts. DPI will also need additional support, and many district leaders expressed the additional need for support that this Model will require. Similarly, if micro-credentials become the responsibility of the state or EPPs, they will need the human capacity to develop, issue, and assess the micro-credentials to candidates or current teachers.

#### **4. Increase Compensation, especially for Additional Duties**

Many participants recommend that we move forward with increasing compensation significantly now.

Many participants noted that while this compensation appears to be very positive for most educators, they did not see the \$30,000 starting salary for the Apprenticeship level to attract people into the field. Several shared that this is not much of a jump, if any, for TAs, data managers, or others who they might hope to attract into the field. This is also not a very competitive salary when compared to other industries.

Participants expressed concern about the many additional duties that educators, especially Level IV educators, would be expected to take on as a part of this Model. They recognize the time required to mentor, to conduct peer observations, and to take on other leadership roles and believe that educators should be paid for those duties.

Recommendations include being specific about where current educators transition into this Model and any hold harmless provisions that may accompany this Model. They recommend that the entire pay scale starts at \$40,000, not \$30,000. Some recommended a tiered system of where pay begins based upon the need of the districts. As referenced in the next section, many discussed the National Board Certifications and credit and pay for advanced degrees.

Finally, questions were raised about educators who have already renewed their license once or

many times. If current educators transition into a License IV, they should get credit (and thus increased pay) for each of the renewal cycles. The Model shares what happens for future renewals, but participants agree that educators should get credit and corresponding pay for their work and renewals to date.

### **5. Ensure NBCT and Master Degree Pay Supplements**

Participants recommend that the Model and the legislature continue to provide the 12% supplement for National Board Certified Teachers. School and district leaders and EPP representatives also expressed the importance of honoring advanced degrees through pay supplements. This includes those grandfathered into receiving masters pay (and for other advanced degrees), as well as those who have earned or will earn it into the future. Participants noted that if we are willing to depend on micro-credentials for advancement in licensure and pay, why are we not willing to honor completing graduate level programs from our accredited institutions.

### **6. Create/Include Balanced, Multiple Measures**

While participants see the multiple measures as a strength for this Model, they are concerned about what those multiple measures are. They recommend that the Model includes a balanced approach to objective and potentially subjective measures. They caution against adding significant work on top of the already arduous teaching responsibilities. They were concerned about student surveys and the data behind them in terms of advancing in licensure, and they want to ensure that the observations that will potentially be tied to pay are implemented in a non-biased way with inter-rater reliability and opportunities to triangulate data. One recommendation includes a matrix of factors that are balanced and job-embedded on the work teachers are already doing.

Additionally, participants recommend that if you come from an EPP and/or have achieved Level III, you should not have to undertake additional testing.

### **7. Address Implementation Issues in the Model Itself**

The Model should address implementation issues that are critical to meeting the goals of the Model. For example, how current educators transition into the system must be included. The specific multiple measures that will be used must be identified and specified. The roles and funding for human capacity needs should be identified as a cost of the Model. While this may not seem like policy issues for the Model development, they are critical to the policy having the intended impact and cannot be left to chance. If schools, districts, the state, and EPPs do not have the resources, as an example, the licensure system will not be implemented with fidelity and will likely lead to different outcomes.

### **8. Include Critical Components for Current Educators in the Model**



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This is referenced in other sections, but it is worth noting here that many, many participants noted how important it is that the Model clearly depicts how current educators enter into the Model. This includes those in roles that may be seen as Advanced Teaching Roles. Participants want to know licensure levels, as well as compensation.

### **9. Ensure Equity across Educators, Schools, and Districts in the Model**

Participants recommend that developers of the Model utilize an equity lens to ensure that all educators, schools, and districts have the opportunity to benefit fully from this Model. Educators should be able to progress regardless of subject or grade level. Tier 1 or higher need districts should have the ability to attract excellent educators (potentially with increased starting salaries).

### **10. Include Reciprocity and Additional Pathways to Increase Recruitment**

Many educators or candidates come from other states besides NC, and many have experience, especially in military, university, or transient communities. The Model should directly address reciprocity and a reasonable way to license educators with a proven track record in another state. Additionally, highly educated individuals with work experience or substitutes should have ways to enter the system at an appropriate level based upon their years of work experience and potential.

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**View all appendices [here](#).**

*Contributors to this brief include Mary Ann Wolf, PhD; Emma Miller; Lauren Fox, PhD; and Elizabeth Paul.*