**Section 25.60 Alternative Educator Licensure Program for Teachers**

This Section establishes requirements in addition to those set forth in Section 21B-50 of the Code for an institution of higher education or a not-for-profit entity recognized and approved to offer educator preparation programs under Subpart C to provide an alternative approach to obtaining a PEL.

a) General Requirements

Each alternative educator licensure program shall:

1) include a program of study that addresses the content enumerated in Section 21B-50(b)(1) of the Code. For purposes of this subsection (a)(1), instruction relative to special education, English learners, and reading shall meet the criteria set forth in Section 25.25(a).

2) provide up to two years of residency pursuant to Section 21B-50(b)(2) of the Code during which the candidate is assigned to teach full time for at least one year as the teacher of record or a co-teacher.

A) During the first school year of the residency, the program shall assign a mentor teacher to each candidate.

i) The mentor shall:

● hold a PEL and be employed by the school district where the candidate is serving the residency;

● have three years of full-time teaching experience in the 10 years immediately preceding assignment as a mentor; and

● have achieved a performance evaluation rating of proficient or higher in the two most recent evaluations.

ii) In a preschool educational program that meets the criteria established in Section 2-3.71 of the Code, each candidate shall be assigned a mentor or qualified equivalent of a mentor.

B) During the second year of residency, if applicable, the program shall assign a teacher who meets the requirements of subsection (a)(2)(A) to serve as a coach for each candidate, providing consultation and support, as needed.

3) involve a partnership of the institution or not-for-profit entity offering the alternative educator program with a public school district or nonpublic school that meets the criteria set forth in Section 21B-50(d) of the Code or a preschool educational program that meets the criteria established in Section 2-3.71 of the Code. Candidates also may serve:

A) in the case of early childhood endorsements, in a position for which a PEL endorsed for early childhood is required pursuant to the rules of the State Board at 23 Ill. Adm. Code 235;

B) in a facility operated by a provider approved by the State Superintendent to contract with school districts for the provision of special education services pursuant to Section 14-7.02 of the Code and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 401; or

C) in a charter school.

4) At the conclusion of the first or second year of residency, administer a comprehensive assessment to gauge the candidate's teaching effectiveness. The assessment shall be conducted by the principal or, in a preschool educational program that meets the criteria established in Section 2-3.71 of the Code, a principal or qualified equivalent of the school to which the candidate is assigned, and the coordinator of the alternative educator program appointed by the institution or not-for-profit entity. *If there is disagreement about the candidate's teaching effectiveness at the end of the first year of residency, a second year of residency shall be required. If there is disagreement between the two evaluators at the end of the second year of residency, a third year of residency shall be completed under a professional development plan developed by the principal and preparation program.* (See Section 21B-50(b)(4) and (d) of the Code.)

b) Candidate Qualifications

1) In order to participate in the first year of residency, the candidate shall:

A) apply for an ELS-APE, which shall be issued upon the presentation of evidence of having met the requirements set forth in Section 21B-50(c) of the Code and payment of the fee required under Section 21B-40 of the Code;

B) complete the course of study required under subsection (a)(1); and

C) pass the content area test for area in which licensure is sought, as required by Section 21B-30(d) of the Code and Section 25.720. Subsequent endorsements may be added to the ELS-APE at the time of issuance if the candidate has completed all required coursework and passed the content test for each subsequent endorsement, as required under Section 25.100.

2) During the first year of residency, the candidate shall:

A) Complete any additional coursework relative to the standards set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 24 and the content-area standards for the teaching field of the endorsement, as required under Section 25.120;

B) Until August 4, 2023 (the effective date of Public Act 103-488), and beginning again on September 1, 2025, pass a teacher performance assessment; and

C) Upon finishing the first year of residency, be recommended for either the professional educator license or a second year of residency in accordance with the program's process established pursuant to subsection (c)(6)(C).

3) If necessary, a candidate may complete any additional coursework relative to the standards set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 24 and the content-area standards for the teaching field of the endorsement, as required under Section 25.120, during the second year of residency or after the first year of residency; however, the coursework must be complete prior to receiving licensure.

4) If necessary, a candidate may complete a third year of residency pursuant to Section 21B-50(b)(4) of the Code.

c) Proposal Requirements

1) Each proposal shall describe the role and responsibilities of the institution or not-for-profit entity and of the school district or nonpublic school with which the institution or entity will partner. The proposal also shall identify the program coordinator to be assigned by the institution or entity to oversee the candidates in the alternative program.

A) The proposal shall include a plan to ensure that the program coordinator visits the classroom in which each candidate is placed for an average of one day a week during the school year. Visits may occur in-person or virtually.

B) Any program coordinator assigned to the candidates under this subsection (c)(1) shall meet the requirement for training under subsection (c)(7).

2) Each proposal shall demonstrate how the program will evaluate the congruence of a candidate's baccalaureate education, the candidate's employment experience in a field requiring application of that education, and the teaching area for which the candidate seeks preparation and licensure.

3) For candidates who have not completed a major in the particular content area of the endorsement sought, as required under Section 21B-50(c) of the Code, the institution or not-for-profit entity shall describe the process and criteria it will use to determine whether the candidates' coursework and prior experience align to the standards for the content area of the endorsement. Coursework, or a combination of experience and coursework, must be equivalent to at least 9 semester hours in the endorsement areas for entry into the program, and at least 32 semester hours of credit in the areas required under Section 25.25(a)(2)(A) prior to entitlement for the PEL. At least 18 of the 32 hours must be in the specific endorsement area (e.g., biology or political science).

A) Any transcript evaluation the program conducts pursuant to this subsection (c)(3) shall be provided to the State Superintendent for approval no later than 45 days before the candidate is to be admitted into the program.

B) For candidates seeking an endorsement in early childhood, elementary, or special education, a *major in the content area of one of the sciences* (Section 21B-50(c)(3) of the Code) shall be understood to mean any of the biological, physical, or social sciences.

4) Each proposal shall provide an assurance that all candidates will be required to pass a teacher performance assessment no later than the end of the first year of residency, if required by this Section or Section 21B-30 of the Code.

5) Each proposal shall describe the proposed course of study.

A) Each proposal shall demonstrate how candidates will acquire knowledge of content and skills equivalent to the content and skills contained in a preparation program approved pursuant to Subpart C with regard to:

i) *instructional planning*;

ii) *instructional strategies, including* those meeting the criteria for instruction relative to *special education, reading, and English language learning* set forth in Section 25.25(b);

iii) *classroom management*; and

iv) *the assessment of students and use of data to drive instruction*. (Section 21B-50(b)(1) of the Code)

B) Each proposal shall include provisions for determining the amount of time individual candidates will need in order to complete the proposed course of study, based upon factors, such as their experience and the type of program offered.

C) Each proposal shall describe the field experiences in which candidates will participate before beginning their first year of residency.

D) Each program shall include a preservice assessment of each candidate's performance, to be conducted by the institution or not-for-profit entity responsible for the program at the conclusion of the course of study in order to determine the candidate's readiness for the two-year teaching assignment. Each proposal shall state the criteria for the institution's or entity's determination of candidates' readiness.

6) Each proposal shall describe the proposed arrangements for candidates' teaching assignments under this Section and shall provide for these to be set forth in a formal, written agreement between the participating entity responsible for the program and the school districts, early childhood or nonpublic special education facility, or charter school where candidates will practice. Each agreement shall address:

A) the nature and intensity of the support to be provided to candidates by the mentor, as well as any experienced teachers and other staff members of the district, including:

i) the qualifications and experience of the mentor and any of the assisting teachers and staff;

ii) the estimated amount of time the mentor and any assisting teachers and staff will devote to advising and assisting candidates; and

iii) the specific roles of the mentor and any assisting teachers and staff;

B) provisions enabling candidates to compensate for teaching time lost due to emergencies; and

C) the process and criteria to be used by the principal, or qualified equivalent, of the school where the candidate is placed and the program coordinator to recommend the candidate for a professional educator license after one year of residency or placement in a second year of residency. (Section 21B-50(b)(2) of the Code)

7) Each proposal shall describe the proposed method of comprehensively assessing candidates' teaching performance at the conclusion of the first or second year of residency. This method shall, at a minimum, meet the requirements set forth in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 50.120 and be conducted by an individual who has successfully completed the prequalification process and passed the required assessment authorized by Section 24A-3 of the Code. The assessment methods shall be set forth in a formal, written agreement between the participating entity responsible for the program and the school districts where candidates will practice. Each agreement shall describe:

A) the roles of the principal and program coordinator who will participate in the evaluation of candidates;

B) assessment methods capable of demonstrating whether a candidate is:

i) knowledgeable about specific subject matter and strategies for teaching that subject matter to students with differing needs; and

ii) skilled in managing and monitoring students' learning;

C) the professional development process to be used either for those candidates who receive a "needs improvement" rating at the conclusion of the assessment process or in instances when the principal and program coordinator cannot agree. This process shall address the candidate's weaknesses and deficiencies identified during the assessment and assist the candidate in making improvement during the third year of residency relative to those weaknesses and deficiencies. The option for professional development and a third year of residency shall not be afforded to any candidate who receives "unsatisfactory" ratings from both the principal and program coordinator or for anyone who receives an "unsatisfactory" rating from either the principal or program coordinator and a "needs improvement" rating from either the principal or program coordinator; and

D) *assurances from the partner school districts to provide intensive mentoring and supports through at least the end of the second full year of teaching* (through the first year of teaching on the professional educator license) *for educators who completed the Alternative Educators Licensure Program in less than two years.* (Section 21B-50(d) of the Code)

8) Each proposal shall delineate any criteria, in addition to a candidate's receiving a rating of "proficient" or higher at the conclusion of the comprehensive assessment required under subsection (c)(7), by which candidates will be recommended for the PEL endorsed in the content area and grade level of the candidate's residency practice by the participating entity responsible for the program.

9) Proposals shall be submitted electronically to the State Superintendent or designee.

d) Program Approval

Proposals for the establishment of alternative programs for teacher licensure meeting the specifications of this Section and Section 21B-50 of the Code shall be approved by the State Superintendent pursuant to the requirements set forth in Section 25.120. Programs shall be reviewed in consultation with SEPLB.

e) *Successful completion of the program shall be deemed to satisfy any other practice or student teaching and content matter requirements established by law*. (Section 21B-50(b) of the Code) A candidate successfully completing the program shall receive a PEL endorsed in the content area and grade levels of the residency practice upon application and payment of the fee required under Section 21B-40 of the Code.

f) Each alternative program established pursuant to this Section shall be subject to the review process and reporting requirements described in Subpart C.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 7729, effective May 9, 2024)