**Section 25.480 Supplemental Documentation and Review of Certain License Applications**

This Section sets forth the requirements for supplemental documentation and other information that an applicant must submit when the applicant has provided an affirmative response or indicated noncompliance with any of the requirements set forth in Sections 25.485 through 25.492 or has knowingly misrepresented any qualifications to obtain a license pursuant to Section 21B-15 of the Code. An application for issuance, renewal, reinstatement, or registration of a license shall not be processed until all supplemental documentation has been received. References to "license" in this Section and any of Sections 25.485 through 25.492 shall be understood to mean "certificate" if the sanction affected (or the violation occurred when an individual held) a teaching, administrative, school service personnel or substitute teaching certificate previously issued by the State Board.

a) Personal Statement

When a personal statement is required to be submitted, the applicant shall provide the information required under this subsection (a). A personal statement shall not be afforded full weight by the committee reviewing the application and supplemental documentation if the statement fails to adequately address each of the requirements of this subsection (a) to the degree necessary to enable the review committee to make a determination of whether the applicant has been rehabilitated and should be licensed as a professional educator. Each personal statement shall:

1) be written in the applicant's own words (statements written by an attorney or someone other than the applicant shall be considered a letter of reference);

2) provide a detailed description of the conduct and circumstances that led to the knowing misrepresentation of the applicant's qualifications to obtain a license or a detailed description of the conduct and circumstances for the license sanction, criminal conviction, the indicated report of child abuse or neglect, or adjudication or finding of sexual misconduct, as defined under Section 22-85.5 of the Code (whichever is applicable);

3) provide evidence that the applicant has been rehabilitated, including an explanation of why the applicant believes the applicant is of good character, merits receipt of an educator license, and would be an asset to the field of professional educators; and

4) provide any other information that is requested by the State Board that is relevant to the agency's review and understanding of the reasons for the knowing misrepresentation of the applicant's qualifications to obtain a license, the license sanction the circumstances of the criminal conviction, the indicated report of child abuse or neglect, or adjudication or finding of sexual misconduct, as defined under Section 22-85.5 of the Code (whichever is applicable).

b) Character References

When character references are required, the applicant shall provide at least three letters that meet the requirements set forth in this subsection. A character reference shall not be afforded full weight by the committee reviewing the application and supplemental documentation if the reference fails to adequately address each of the requirements of this subsection to the degree necessary to enable the review committee to make a determination of whether the applicant has been rehabilitated and should be licensed as a professional educator. Each character reference shall:

1) be written by a colleague of the applicant who is employed in an educational field or by a faculty member of the applicant's educator preparation program who has first-hand knowledge of or experience working with the applicant; if the applicant has no prior education-related experience, then an employer of the applicant may submit a character reference;

2) state that the purpose of the letter is to assist the applicant in obtaining an educator license and acknowledge the specific conduct and circumstances that led to the applicant's license sanction, the conviction, report of child abuse or neglect, or adjudication or finding of sexual misconduct, as defined under Section 22-85.5 of the Code (whichever is applicable);

3) state the author's relationship (e.g., former instructor, employer, or school colleague) with the applicant and the length of time the author has known the applicant;

4) explain in detail why the author believes that, in spite of the reason for the applicant's license sanction, the conviction, report of child abuse or neglect, or adjudication or finding of sexual misconduct, as defined under Section 22-85.5 of the Code (whichever is applicable), the applicant has been rehabilitated and why the applicant would be an asset to the field of professional educators; and

5) be signed by the author and include the telephone number or email address to be used should the committee reviewing the character reference have questions or need additional information and, as applicable, be presented on the letterhead of the author's place of employment.

c) Application Review Process

1) The application and supplemental documentation shall be reviewed by a committee made up of staff from the State Board's licensure department. The committee may contact the applicant if additional information is needed. Upon conclusion of the committee's review, the committee shall notify the applicant of the agency's decision to deny or its intent to deny an application, by certified mail, return receipt requested mailed to the address shown on the application. A decision to issue the license will be recorded in ELIS and an electronic notification to that effect will be sent to the applicant.

2) If the agency intends to deny an application on character grounds pursuant to Section 21B-15 of the Code, the applicant shall be notified pursuant to subsection (c)(1) of the opportunity to request a credibility hearing. The applicant's request for a credibility hearing shall be submitted in writing to the agency no later than 10 days after the applicant's receipt of the agency's notification. Requests shall be sent to the Educator Licensure Department, 100 North First Street, E-240, Springfield, Illinois 62777, or to educatorcredibility@isbe.net. Failure to request a credibility hearing within the 10-day timeframe will result in a denial of the application.

A) Credibility hearings may be held via video conference or in-person and will not be held if the applicant has not submitted all required documentation at least 72 hours prior to the hearing. At this hearing, the applicant may present a statement or provide documentary evidence and present character witnesses who wish to make a statement on behalf of the applicant; however, if the applicant does not submit this documentary evidence within 72 hours prior to the hearing, the hearing may be postponed by the committee until all documentary evidence can be reviewed by the committee.

B) The applicant shall not be permitted to pose questions to the review committee. An applicant may be represented by counsel at this hearing, but the applicant's attorney will not be permitted to address or pose questions to the review committee.

C) No later than 30 days after the conclusion of the credibility hearing, the review committee shall issue to the applicant its decision to grant or deny the application. The decision of the review committee is a final decision and is reviewable pursuant to the Administrative Review Law [735 ILCS 5/Art. III], as provided in Section 21B-90 of the Code. A timely filed action for administrative review shall act as a stay of enforcement of the denial.

d) Eligibility to Reapply

An applicant who was denied an initial license or denied the renewal, registration or reinstatement of a license on the grounds that the applicant does not have good character or that the applicant knowingly misrepresented any qualifications to obtain a license pursuant to Section 21B-15 of the Code is ineligible to apply for any educator license or endorsement on any currently held license for a period of up to five calendar years from the date of the denial as determined by the review committee. If an application is submitted during the period of ineligibility, the application shall be denied and the application fee will not be refunded.

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