Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Members of the Education Policy Committee

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: November 19, 2026

SUBJECT: COMAR 13A.12.02.03 Pathways to Teacher Licensure
Permission to Adopt

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Pillar 2: High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders
Goal: Every school has high-quality and diverse teachers and leaders.
Outcome: 2.A: Increase the percentage of teachers with a professional license.

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to request permission to adopt amendments to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) COMAR 13A.12.02.03 *Pathways to Teacher Licensure.* These amendments serve to realign COMAR with Md Code, Education Article §6-126, which was amended during the 2026 legislative session by Senate Bill (SB) 311.

Background

Under Maryland law, the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) shares joint authority with the State Board of Education (SBOE) to develop regulations governing teacher certification and preparation. When the PSTEB initiates a regulatory change, the SBOE must also review the proposed regulation. If a majority of the SBOE members approve of the regulation, the regulation promulgation process continues.

After the PSTEB and SBOE vote to approve a regulation, the proposed regulation is sent to the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee (AELR) for a 15-day review period. If the AELR Committee does not hold up the proposed regulation for further review, it is published in the Maryland Register for a 30-day public comment period. At the end of the comment period, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff reviews and summarizes the public comments, which are presented to both boards. Thereafter, MSDE staff will present a recommendation to both the PSTEB and SBOE to either: (1) adopt the regulation in the form it was proposed; or (2) revise the regulation and adopt it as final because the suggested revision is not a substantive change; or (3) withdraw the regulation and re-propose it because the suggested revision is a substantive change. At any time during this process, the AELR Committee may stop the promulgation process and hold a hearing. Thereafter, it may recommend to the Governor that the regulation not be adopted as a final regulation, or the AELR Committee may release the regulation for final adoption. The PSTEB and SBOE would then vote to adopt the regulation.

Executive Summary

COMAR 13A.12.02.03 establishes the pathways to initial teacher licensure. During the 2026 legislative session, SB 311 modified Md. Code, Education Article §6-126, expanding the options for licensure applicants to demonstrate pedagogical knowledge. The amended law allows Maryland program candidates to demonstrate pedagogical knowledge by completing one of the following performance assessment options:

1. The edTPA (i.e., nationally recognized performance-based assessment);
2. A portfolio–based assessment developed by a Maryland teacher preparation program that has national accreditation or has been approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE);
3. A local education agency induction program that meets certain statutory requirements approved by the Accountability and Implementation Board and MSDE; or
4. The MSDE-sponsored Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

Additionally, the amended law allows licensure applicants who were prepared and licensed in another state to demonstrate pedagogical knowledge by submitting one of the following:

1. Passing scores on the edTPA;
2. Completion of an induction program that meets specific statutory requirements, approved by the Accountability and Implementation Board and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE);
3. A National Board Certificate; or
4. Two years of effective teaching evaluations from any school or school system.

The drafted amendments to COMAR 13A.12.02.03 embed the new options for pedagogical knowledge throughout the appropriate licensure pathways.

On July 9, 2026, and July 28, 2026, the PSTEB and SBOE, respectively, granted permission to publish the amendments in the Maryland Register for public comment. No comments were received.

Action

MSDE is requesting that the State Board of Education grant permission to adopt amendments to COMAR 13A.12.02.03 *Pathways to Teacher Licensure.*

Attachment

COMAR 13A.12.02.03 Pathways to Teacher Licensure.pdf

.03 Pathways to Teacher Licensure.

A. Pathways to Initial Teacher Licenses. Applicants shall meet the requirements of one pathway to earn initial teacher licensure.

(1) Maryland Approved Program. Teacher candidates who complete a Maryland approved educator preparation program as set forth in COMAR 13A.07.06 shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Bachelor's degree or higher;

(b) Completion of an approved program as set forth in COMAR 13A.07.06;

(c) Documentation of one of the following:

(i) Passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a basic literacy skills assessment as approved by the State Board of Education;

(ii) Minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on the most recently earned degree; or

(iii) Three years of effective evaluations from a local school system in Maryland.

(d) Passing scores as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a content licensure test approved by the State Board of Education;

(e) Passing scores as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a reading instruction licensure test approved by the State Board of Education, or attestation of proficiency through observation completed by a Department-recognized assessor using a Department-provided observation tool; and

(f) Meet one of the following qualifications:

(i) Passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a nationally recognized, portfolio-based performance assessment approved by the State Board of Education; [or]

(ii) *A portfolio–based assessment of a teacher preparation program that has national accreditation or has been approved by the department;*

(iii) Completion of a comprehensive local school system teacher induction program that meets the requirements listed under §B(2) of this regulation[.]*; or*

(iv) Completion of the MSDE-Sponsored Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

(2) In-District Training Program. Teacher candidates who are hired as a teacher of record in a Maryland local school system may complete a Department-approved in-district training program. Candidates seeking licensure under the in-district pathway shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Possession of a conditional license in the subject area and at the grade level of the license sought.

(b) Demonstration of content knowledge by completing the following:

(i) Bachelor's degree or higher related to the field of the license sought;

(ii) Bachelor's degree or higher in any field and a minimum of 24 semester hours of content coursework related to the license sought, which may be completed in-person, virtually, synchronously, and/or asynchronously; or

(iii) Bachelor's degree or higher in any field and passing scores as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a content licensure test approved by the State Board of Education

(c) Completion of a Maryland induction program under COMAR 13A.07.01 that includes:

(i) On-site supervision and coaching;

(ii) Ongoing instructional mentoring during the induction; and

(iii) An effective, or comparable, rating on a summative evaluation of teaching performance at the end of the induction period.

(d) Completion of a Department-approved sequence of pedagogical coursework, which may be completed in-person, virtually, synchronously, and/or asynchronously, as follows:

(i) The teaching candidate shall ensure that this sequence of coursework is aligned to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards; and

(ii) The district and coursework provider shall agree to a memorandum of understanding.

(e) Attestation from the district training program supervisor, or designee, school principal, and coursework provider, that the candidate is prepared for licensure.

(f) Special Provisions. Candidates seeking licensure in the areas of elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages, shall complete additional requirements, as follows:

(i) Candidates who fulfill §A(2)(b)(i) or (ii) of this regulation shall present 6 semester hours of coursework in each of the content areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies; or

(ii) Candidates who fulfill §A(2)(b)(iii) of this regulation shall submit passing scores on an approved elementary assessment that includes subtests in the content areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies, each of which equals 6 semester hours of credit in that content area; and

(iii) Passing score on a reading instruction test, approved by the State Board of Education, or provide attestation of proficiency through observation completed by a Department-recognized assessor using a Department-provided observation tool.

(3) Experienced Nonpublic School Teacher. Experienced teacher candidates working in Maryland nonpublic schools approved under COMAR 13A.09.09 shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Bachelor's degree or higher related to the field of the license sought;

(b) Verification of 5 years of effective teaching experience in the field and at the grade level of the license sought at a Maryland nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.09;

(c) Meet one of the following qualifications:

(i) Passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a nationally recognized, portfolio-based performance assessment approved by the State Board of Education;

(ii) An effective, or comparable, rating on a year-end evaluation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system, State-operated school, or approved nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10;

(iii) Complete a comprehensive induction program under §B(2) of this regulation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system; or

(iv) Hold a National Board Certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; and

(d) Special Provision. Candidates seeking licensure in the areas of elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages, shall submit of a passing score on a reading instruction test, approved by the State Board of Education, or provide attestation of proficiency through observation completed by a Department-recognized assessor using a Department-provided observation tool.

(4) Out-of-State Teacher Preparation Program. Teacher candidates who complete a teacher preparation program in another state or foreign country shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Bachelor's degree or higher, or a U.S. equivalent of a foreign degree;

(b) Complete a teacher preparation program, to include a clinical internship, approved to lead to licensure in another state or foreign country, in the license area being sought;

(c) Meet one of the following qualifications:

(i) Passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a nationally recognized, portfolio-based performance assessment approved by the State Board of Education;

(ii) *2 years of effective, or comparable, teacher evaluations from a school or school system;*

(iii) An effective, or comparable, rating on a year-end evaluation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system, State-operated school, or approved nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10;

(i*v*[ii]) Complete a comprehensive induction program under §B(2) of this regulation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system; or

([i]v) Hold a National Board Certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; and

(d) Special Provision. Candidates seeking licensure in the areas of elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages, shall submit a passing score on a reading instruction test, approved by the State Board of Education, or attestation of proficiency through observation completed by a Department-recognized assessor using a Department-provided observation tool.

(5) Out-of-State License. Teacher candidates who hold a valid professional license/certificate from another state or foreign country shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Bachelor's degree or higher, or a U.S. equivalent for a foreign degree;

(b) Valid, professional license or certificate from another state or foreign country in the license area being sought;

(c) Meet one of the following qualifications:

(i) Passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a portfolio-based performance assessment approved by the State Board of Education;

(ii) *2 years of effective, or comparable, evaluations from a school or school system;*

(iii) An effective, or comparable, rating on a year-end evaluation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system, State-operated school, or approved nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10;

(i*v*[ii]) Complete a comprehensive induction program under §B(2) of this regulation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system; or

([i]v) Hold a National Board Certificate from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; and

(d) Special Provision. Candidates seeking licensure in the areas of elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and English to Speakers of Other Languages, shall submit a passing score on a reading instruction test, approved by the State Board of Education, or provide an attestation of proficiency through observation completed by a Department-recognized assessor using a Department-provided observation tool.

(6) National Board Certificate. Teacher candidates who hold a National Board Certificate shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Bachelor's degree or higher; and

(b) National Board Certificate issued from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, for which a comparable Maryland license exists.

(7) Fine Arts Transcript Analysis. Individuals with content expertise in the areas of art, dance, music, or theater shall:

(a) Obtain a bachelor's degree or higher in the fine arts content area being sought;

(b) Obtain a bachelor's degree or higher in a fine arts area related to the area of licensure being sought, and 3 years of satisfactory content-related occupational experience, which may include satisfactory post-secondary teaching experience; or

(c) Obtain a bachelor's degree or higher in any field with:

(i) At least 24 semester hours of content coursework in the fine arts license area sought; or

(ii) A passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a content assessment approved by the State Board of Education and 3 years of content-related

occupational experience, which may include satisfactory post-secondary teaching experience in the area to be taught;

(d) Complete 21 semester hours of credits of professional education coursework from an institution of higher education or through Department-approved continuing professional development credits, to include 3 credits for each of the following:

(i) Methods of teaching;

(ii) Introduction to special education;

(iii) Human growth and development;

(iv) Assessment;

(v) Literacy in the content area;

(vi) Culturally responsive teaching/multicultural education/strategies for multilingual learners; and

(vii) Classroom management; and

(e) Meet one of the following qualifications:

(i) Obtain a passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a nationally recognized, portfolio-based performance assessment approved by the State Board of Education;

(ii) Obtain effective, or comparable, ratings on two, year-end evaluations if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system, State-operated school, or approved nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10; or

(iii) Complete a comprehensive induction program under §B(2) of this regulation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system.

(8) Secondary Content Transcript Analysis. To earn a 7-12 grade band license, individuals with secondary content expertise shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Obtain a bachelor's degree or higher:

(i) In the content area being sought;

(ii) In any field with a minimum of 24 semester hours of content coursework in the area of license sought;

(iii) In any field with 3 years of content-related occupational experience and a passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a content assessment approved by the State Board of Education; or

(iv) In any field with 3 years of experience teaching at an accredited institution of higher education in the content area sought; and

(b) Complete 21 semester hours of credits of professional education coursework from an institution of higher education or through Department-approved continuing professional development credits, to include 3 credits for each of the following:

(i) Methods of teaching;

(ii) Introduction to special education;

(iii) Human growth and development;

(iv) Assessment;

(v) Literacy in the content area;

(vi) Culturally responsive teaching/multicultural education/strategies for multilingual Learners; and

(vii) Classroom management; and

(c) Meet one of the following qualifications:

(i) Obtain a passing score as established by the State Superintendent of Schools on a nationally recognized, portfolio-based performance assessment approved by the State Board of Education;

(ii) Obtain effective, or comparable, ratings on two, year-end evaluations if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system, State-operated school, or approved nonpublic school approved under COMAR 13A.09.10; or

(iii) Complete a comprehensive induction program under § B(2) of this regulation if the individual is employed by a Maryland local school system.

B. Special Provisions.

(1) The Department shall evaluate credits from institutions in other countries for comparability of degree and coursework by an independent agency authorized to analyze foreign credentials and designated by the Department. The evaluation is final.

(2) Comprehensive Induction Program. A comprehensive induction program shall:

(a) Be developed by a local school system, either independently or collaboratively with other local school systems;

(b) Be approved by the Department;

(c) Last the lesser of 3 years or the amount of time a teacher holds a conditional license; and

(d) Include a locally developed portfolio component that is aligned with the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards.