

### **New Educator Licensure System Coming to Illinois**

One of the hot topics on many educators' minds today is the new licensure system scheduled to take effect June 1, 2013. Every educator who currently holds a valid Illinois teacher, administrator, school social worker or substitute certificate, or an NCLB paraprofessional approval will receive the appropriate educator license in the exchange. The process is automatic and educators need not do anything to receive the new credentials.

A significant difference in the new system is that licenses will not be available in printed format. Instead, educators may access their credentials online in a new database (ELIS), much the same way "Current Credentials" and "Pending Credentials" are accessed in the Educator Certification System (ECS) today.

While new legislation and administrative rules lay the groundwork for the licensure system, many specifics still need to be determined, so not all questions can be answered at this time. It is better to delay a response to a question than to provide an incorrect answer. Therefore, this agency, the regional offices of education, and professional associations and unions will provide information on an ongoing basis as additional legislation and administrative rules are promulgated.

#### **What Can You, As an Educator, Do to Prepare for the Changes?**

One major question from educators is, "What should we be doing now to prepare for the new system?" The answer is "continue doing what you are currently doing."

- Participate in quality professional development and, if you are in an administrative position, complete one Administrators' Academy course each fiscal year.
- Check the ISBE website, as well as that of the regional offices of education, teacher unions, and professional organizations for updates.
- Pay close attention to communications sent to you by professional organizations, teacher unions, and regional offices of education. They may contain crucial information about the licensure system.
- Renew and register your certificates before June 1 if your renewal cycle ends June 30, 2013, to further ensure a seamless transition to the licensure system. Your renewal requirements will not change if your certificate is valid through June 30, 2013, although the process may be streamlined.
- Be patient until final renewal requirements are released for those who are renewing July 1, 2014. Determinations about renewal of the licenses and what will count and how much credit each activity will be worth are yet to be decided. You will have sufficient time to renew your new license(s) once the system is implemented.
- Reinstate your lapsed certificate prior to June 1, 2013. If you hold a lapsed certificate at the time of the exchange, you will receive a license that is lapsed and invalid. Reinstating before June 1, 2013 will just ensure you receive a valid license on which you may work.

**Illinois Educator Licenses**

There are three types of licenses that you could receive in the exchange:

- Professional Educator License,
- Educator License with Stipulations, or
- Substitute License.

Each of these has a different validity period so you should check your validity period when the exchange is complete. Your new license will have the same validity period that your certificate has currently. In other words, if your certificate is valid until June 30, 2015, your new license will be valid until that date also, with two exceptions.

- Those who currently hold substitute certificates will exchange for a Substitute License that is valid for a full 5-year cycle – until June 30, 2018.
- Individuals who currently hold an Initial Teaching Certificate will receive a Professional Educator License valid for a full 5-year cycle – until June 30, 2018. There is no license equivalent to an initial certificate.

Another distinction of the license is that many of what you know now as “types of certificates” will become endorsements on the licenses. For instance, a Professional Educator License may have an endorsement for English/Language Arts Grades 9 – 12, School Counselor Grades 9 – 12, and General Administrator Grades Pre-K - 12. The area in which you are qualified to work and the grade range will appear in your credentials.

A few examples would be: 1) If you currently hold a Type 03 Elementary Teaching Certificate your Professional Educator License (PEL) will have an Elementary Self-contained K-9 endorsement. 2) If you hold a Type 10 Special Certificate allowing you to teach Physical Education K-12, your PEL will have a PE K-12 endorsement.

**Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS)**

A new database called the Educator Licensure Information System or ELIS will replace the current Educator Certification System (ECS). You will find great improvements in the new system like increased speed, easier navigation, and a much more streamlined process. Check periodically in your ECS file after February, 2013 for more information about ELIS and a tutorial to assist you in navigating the new system. You may also want to print a copy of your current credentials and professional development activities in ECS for your records.

**Timeframe for Implementing the Licensure System****November 1, 2012 to June, 2013**

- For updates regarding the transition to the Licensure System check the following appropriate websites regularly 1) Illinois State Board of Education/Education Certification System, 2) regional offices of education, 3) teacher unions, 4) professional organizations such as the IPA, IASA, IASB, and IASBO, and 5) your district or school. Also look carefully at any communications from these entities.
- Update and enter your professional development activities in the ECS online system and print out a copy for your records,

- If your renewal cycle ends June 30, 2013, submit your Statement of Assurance and register your certificate(s) using ECS. We suggest you do this prior to June 1, 2013, if possible; however, it is not a requirement.
- Reinstate any lapsed certificates if you intend to work in a position requiring that credential.

**June, 2013**

- Your certificates will be exchanged for the equivalent licenses and endorsements, and you do not have to do anything.
- Log in to the new Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) and update your information. Make sure you have the correct email address entered and update it anytime you change. This will allow ISBE to communicate with you if necessary.
- Become familiar with the new requirements for renewing your license(s).
- If you have any questions, please contact your regional offices of education, or any of the other entities listed in this document.