



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Teacher Licensure Cohort Program
Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Program Overview

The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program, launched by Henrico County in partnership with iTeach, is a proactive and innovative approach to addressing the acute teacher shortages across our school division. The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program is an alternative path for provisional teachers to earn a full, renewable Virginia teaching license in a structured, expedited program. The HCPS Teacher Licensure Cohort Program was recently recognized by the Virginia Department of Education as an exemplary program for its dual approach of providing both in-person professional learning from division leaders and online coursework through iTeach.

The Virginia Department of Education approved the launch of the county-designed, in-division teacher licensure program supported asynchronously by the iTeach online platform. The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program integrates the flexibility of online professional studies courses through iTeach with in-person professional learning, creating a balanced approach that respects the busy schedules and teaching responsibilities of participants. The curriculum is personalized, aligning with individual licensure requirements and teaching objectives and is supplemented by a wide array of resources for mastering essential pedagogical skills. Participants in the program benefit from professional support, including monthly learning sessions led by experienced HCPS specialists, that align with VDOE licensure regulations and performance standards and HCPS best teaching practices. Additionally, the program fosters a cohort approach and a collaborative learning environment, enabling participants to connect with colleagues, share ideas and learn from shared experiences.

The program has two primary goals: to expedite the licensure process for provisionally licensed teachers and to enhance their pedagogical skills, contributing to the overall quality of students' educational experiences in Henrico County. Additionally, the program is directly aligned with one of the strategic goals of Henrico County's current strategic plan, "Destination 2025," which states that "HCPS will recruit, retain and reward educators who nurture the whole child." By providing

comprehensive support, resources and a tailored path to licensure, HCPS demonstrates a commitment to educational excellence and the sustainable development of a competent, fully licensed teaching workforce by providing comprehensive support, resources and a tailored path to licensure.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

The Teacher Licensure Cohort program was designed to mitigate the growing reliance on provisionally licensed educators, primarily driven by substantial shifts in the educational workforce. This includes a surge in teacher retirements, escalated burnout among seasoned teachers and a noticeable decline in the graduation rates from collegiate teacher preparation programs. From 2011 to 2021, Virginia saw an 84.7% escalation in the number of provisionally licensed teachers. Within HCPS, there has been a notable increase of 63.3% in provisionally licensed teachers from 2016 to 2023. The compelling data from this trend underscores the critical demand for initiatives like the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program, which is pivotal in providing professional development and facilitating the licensure process for educators. By ensuring that these teachers meet the stringent qualifications and standards required for full licensure, the program is a creative way to bridge the qualification gap. This concerning trend demonstrates the need for forward-thinking strategies to attract and maintain a pipeline of highly qualified teachers. Consequently, the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program was formulated in direct response to these multifaceted challenges and HCPS' commitment to ensuring that every student learns from a qualified teacher. The initiative represents a proactive measure, aligning not only with state educational mandates but also fortifying the caliber of the educational workforce.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The HCPS Teacher Licensure Cohort Teacher Licensure Cohort Program is an innovative solution to Virginia's pressing teacher shortage, and is replicable by other localities.

Prompted by Henrico County's commitment to seek alternative, outside-the-box methods for recruiting and retaining teachers, the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program has created a no-cost, expedited path to full licensure for provisionally licensed teachers. Traditionally a three-year journey, the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program remarkably reduces the time to full licensure to just one year, demonstrating a keen understanding of the urgent demand for qualified teaching professionals.

The program's cohort learning model further enriches this path, offering a network of support that not only enhances the professional development experience but also fosters lasting friendships and professional ties. This supportive network is invaluable in creating a collaborative and nurturing educational environment, pivotal for personal and professional growth.

The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program effectively propels professional development and significantly boosts teacher retention rates by featuring customized online courses, comprehensive in-person training and full financial support for licensure exams and professional studies courses .

Moreover, its contribution to fostering a diverse and inclusive teaching workforce aligns seamlessly with Henrico County's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The impact of the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program is measurable, with a notable increase in fully licensed teachers and a marked improvement in classroom experiences countywide. By redefining educational innovation and community engagement, the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program not only merits accolades but also serves as a model of excellence, making it a worthy nominee for a NACo award.

How the Program Was Carried Out

The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program began in September 2023. Eligibility for the cohort is based upon individualized licensure review by the Department of Human Resources. This pathway includes the following endorsement areas

- A K-12 content area (e.g., English as a second language, visual arts, music, health and physical education).
- A particular secondary grade in the 6-12 content area.
- A career and technical education content area (i.e., family and consumer science, JROTC, business education).

Eligible candidates were allowed to opt in the year-long program. The primary objective of the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program is to provide participants with high-quality professional development and ongoing support from HCPS staff members to earn a full renewable Virginia teaching license in one year. The program is designed to expedite the licensure process for provisionally licensed teachers and to enhance their pedagogical skills, contributing to the overall quality of students' educational experiences in Henrico County. Participants can do this while also launching a successful and rewarding career as an HCPS teacher. By providing a comprehensive path that includes professional studies courses, a personalized curriculum and extensive support mechanisms, the program seeks to enhance the teaching skills of these teachers, contributing to the quality of education in Henrico County Public Schools.

The development of this program was initiated in response to the escalating teacher shortage crisis in Virginia and Henrico County, identified through statistical data and trend analysis. Henrico County Public Schools' approval by the Virginia Department of Education to provide an alternative path for participants to earn full, renewable teaching licenses marked the formal inception of this initiative. Henrico County was the only division to receive approval for an alternate path for such a program. The Virginia Department of Education regularly recognizes the Teacher Licensure

Cohort Program as an exemplary path. The implementation timeframe is structured to align with the academic calendar, allowing provisionally licensed teachers to engage in the program without delaying their current teaching responsibilities or incurring further debt for taking state-required professional studies courses.

The program specifically targets teachers who have obtained a provisional license, who have up to five years of teaching experience and who want to earn a full teaching license in:

- A K-12 content area (e.g., English as a second language, visual arts, music, health and physical education).
- A particular secondary grade in the 6-12 content area.
- A career and technical education content area (i.e., family and consumer science, JROTC, business education).

As the driving force behind the initiative, HCPS oversees the coordination and delivery of professional learning sessions, ensuring they align with the VDOE's licensure regulations and HCPS' best teaching practices. HCPS provides financial support by covering costs associated with the professional studies coursework through iTeach. HCPS also covers the costs of testing requirements, such as the Praxis and VCLA exams, for the participants upon successfully completing the program.

HCPS established a partnership with iTeach to offer teachers a licensure path. Through this collaboration, iTeach furnishes participants with asynchronous, online professional studies courses, constituting crucial segments of the comprehensive licensure path. These courses are designed to be self-paced, catering to each participant's individual licensure needs and teaching responsibilities. The iTeach curriculum is supplemented with a wide array of resources to master essential pedagogical skills. Additionally, iTeach's accredited and experienced advisors' mentor and guide the participants throughout the program.

The implementation process of the program is multifaceted. Eligible candidates are identified through the HCPS Department of Human Resources and invited to attend an orientation session to familiarize themselves with the program structure, requirements and resources available. Once participants are enrolled in the program, they begin completing their professional studies courses provided through the iTeach online platform.

In addition to online courses, participants attend advanced professional learning sessions before the school year and monthly full-day sessions during the school year. These are facilitated by HCPS specialists and focus on practical teaching skills, classroom management and pedagogical strategies. The program includes a continual evaluation system to assess its effectiveness. This involves regular reviews of participant progress, feedback sessions and midyear one-on-one check-ins. Adjustments are made to the program, based on participant needs and evolving educational standards.

The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program represents a significant step by HCPS, in partnership with iTeach, to address the teacher shortage crisis in Virginia. By providing a structured path for provisional licensed teachers to achieve full, renewable licensure, the program not only meets the immediate needs of these teachers but also contributes to the long-term goal of enhancing the quality of students' HCPS educational experiences. The collaborative efforts of HCPS and iTeach and the comprehensive support and resources offered ensure that this program is well-positioned to make a meaningful impact in Henrico County.

Financing and Staffing

The program involves specific capital and operating costs in its development and implementation. Recognizing these costs is crucial for entities considering the adoption of this program. The capital expenses include HCPS' partnership with iTeach, which also accounts for substitute pay, facilitating seven school-related leave days for each participant to engage in monthly professional

learning sessions. iTeach delivers the six essential professional studies courses for program participants to achieve full licensure. This includes costs associated with generating course content, instructional materials and assessment tools, all of which are carefully designed to meet the professional studies licensure requirements of the Virginia Department of Education. This year, a total of \$283,650 was spent for iTeach courses for 93 participants and \$36,162 was spent toward substitute pay for 41 participants, which cost \$319,812 in total.

Additionally, HCPS covers the costs associated with licensure testing for participants upon successful completion. This is a significant operating expense, fees for exams like Praxis, VCLA and subject-specific assessments. Furthermore, the program includes professional learning sessions and mentorship provided by HCPS specialists. Operating costs include resources needed for training sessions, such as materials, equipment and possibly catering.

Replicating this program in another county or school division would incur similar capital and operating costs. However, these costs can vary based on several factors. The scale of implementation, such as the size of the target group (i.e., the number of provisionally licensed teachers) and the geographic spread of the program, will significantly influence the costs. If a division already possesses some of the required technology or physical infrastructure, the capital costs would be lower. Similarly, divisions with existing professional development programs might reduce operating costs by integrating this new program with current initiatives. The terms of partnership with a provider like iTeach would also affect costs. Different providers might offer varying pricing models for their services and resources. While the capital and operating costs of the Teacher Licensure Cohort program are substantial, they represent a strategic investment in addressing teacher shortages and enhancing educational quality. For those looking to replicate this model, a thorough analysis of local conditions and requirements is essential to estimate the financial implications accurately. Henrico County will happily consult with other divisions that may be looking to implement alternate paths to licensure for provisionally licensed teachers.

Program Results

The Teacher Licensure Cohort program has demonstrated notable success in its objectives, as evidenced by specific examples and outcome measures. One of the primary success indicators of the program is the increase in the number of provisionally licensed teachers achieving full licensure. Before the implementation of this program, these teachers faced challenges in meeting the comprehensive requirements for a full, renewable state license. They were responsible for enrolling and paying for collegiate programs aligned with the Virginia Department of Education guidelines and paying for and passing required licensing assessments. The program has effectively bridged this gap by providing targeted, accessible educational resources and support. For instance, several participants who initially struggled with passing licensure exams like the Praxis or VCLA have successfully cleared these tests after enrolling in the program. This success can be attributed to the tailored test-preparation resources and the financial support provided by HCPS for these assessments.

Another significant outcome is the improvement in teaching quality among participants. The professional development components of the program, including advanced professional learning sessions and ongoing mentorship, have equipped teachers with enhanced pedagogical skills and classroom management strategies. This is evident from the feedback from program participants and school administrators. Teachers have reported increased confidence in their instructional strategies and administrators have observed noticeable improvements in classroom engagement and student learning outcomes, as noted in the participant quotes below.

“It has been amazing. It would have taken me much longer on my own. I really like the in-person sessions ... I walk away with a lot of knowledge. I like that the sessions are during the workday.”

“It’s been helpful. The professional learning sessions have been aligned with those who are on pace in iTeach. I’ve enjoyed the guest speakers and meeting people in similar and different positions.”

“The program has allowed teachers to come to clear their heads. I can focus on myself as a professional, have available resources and connect with other teachers and other professionals. I have found the content in iTeach helpful. On a personal note, I would not still be teaching if it weren’t for this program.”

The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program markedly enhances diversity, equity and inclusion in HCPS, tailored for provisionally licensed teachers. The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program initiative notably contributes to a more diverse teaching staff, enriching the educational environment with a wider

By introducing this accessible licensure path, HCPS has seen a significant diversification of its teaching workforce, marking a pivotal shift toward a more inclusive educational environment. A more diverse cohort of educators, as seen in the Teacher Licensure Cohort Program participation, introduces varied perspectives and experiences to the classroom and creates an inclusive setting. Furthermore, the program has also had a positive impact on HCPS teacher-retention rates. Historically, the turnover rate among provisionally licensed teachers was a concern, often attributed to the challenges they faced in securing full licensure while balancing their teaching workload. The support provided by this program has led to higher retention of these teachers, as they now have a clear and supported path to full licensure. This outcome is crucial, considering the significant costs of recruiting and training new teachers. In the inaugural year of this program, only 2% of the participants resigned and 96% of the teachers are progressing through the program and are successfully on track to complete their professional studies requirements by the end of the school year.

The program's success is also reflected in its contribution to diversifying the HCPS teaching workforce. The program has helped create a more inclusive and representative educational environment By supporting teachers from various backgrounds to achieve full licensure. This is particularly important in a diverse county like Henrico, where students benefit from being taught by educators who reflect their own diverse backgrounds and experiences.

In terms of quantifiable measures, the program will be evaluated based on the number of provisionally licensed teachers who have completed the program and obtained full licensure, improvements in teacher retention rates and positive changes in classroom performance metrics. Based on survey data for the first four months of the program, 98.8% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they have been satisfied with their professional learning experiences at monthly meetings and 93.7% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the professional learning content was relevant to their current role. Qualitative data from administrators and instructional coaches indicate that they can see improvement in the quality of teaching among the teachers participating in this program.

Brief Summary

The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program, launched by Henrico County in partnership with iTeach, is a proactive and innovative approach to addressing acute teacher shortages. The Teacher Licensure Cohort Program is an alternative path for provisional teachers to earn a full, renewable Virginia teaching license in a structured, expedited program. The HCPS Teacher Licensure Cohort Program was recently recognized by the Virginia Department of Education as an exemplary program for its dual approach of providing both in-person professional learning from division leaders and online coursework through iTeach.

The program was designed to mitigate the growing reliance on provisionally licensed educators, primarily driven by substantial shifts in the educational workforce. This includes a surge in teacher

retirements, escalated burnout among seasoned teachers and a noticeable decline in the graduation rates from collegiate teacher preparation programs.

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Another significant outcome is the improvement in teaching quality among participants, and a more diverse pool of provisionally licensed teachers.

Teacher Licensure Cohort Program Supplemental Material

*See Teacher Licensure Cohort Program Flyer below.

HENRICO COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHER LICENSURE COHORT








WHY CHOOSE THIS ALTERNATIVE PATHWAY?

The Teacher Licensure Cohort is an exclusive opportunity to complete identified professional studies coursework toward fulfilling your provisional license requirements at **no cost**. This structured, expedited pathway is designed to assist you in obtaining a full, renewable teaching license while strengthening your pedagogical skills. By participating in the Teacher Licensure Cohort program, you can expect the following benefits:



PERSONALIZED LEARNING PATHWAY

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

FLEXIBILITY & CONVENIENCE

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

HERE'S WHAT PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO SAY:

-  *"I feel supported and empowered by the TLC program. I am grateful to connect with others going through this shared experience!"*
-  *"I feel set up for success by the TLC program. The professional learning is relevant and I appreciate the support I have received."*
-  *"I feel that I have a strong community that believes in me. I have enjoyed getting to practice what we learn and then reflect on ways I can improve."*

OUR MISSION:

The Henrico County Public Schools Teacher Licensure Cohort will provide participants with high-quality training through the iTeach curriculum and ongoing support from HCPS personnel to help them earn a full-renewable Virginia teaching license while launching a successful and rewarding career as a teacher in HCPS.

OUR VISION:

We believe in teaching and learning through collaboration.

CONTACT US:



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**Scan the QR code for
more information.**

VI- 2/15/24

ETHNICITY/RACE	NUMBER OF PROVISIONALLY LICENSED TEACHERS <i>(As of 7/31/2023)</i>	NUMBER OF PROVISIONALLY LICENSED TEACHERS <i>(As of 10/25/2023)</i>
Asian	13	15
Black	163	197
Hispanic	18	25
White	231	269
Other	22	40

**Teacher Licensure Cohort Program
Supplemental Material**

Month	Topics
September 19, 2023 (8:30-3:30)	Learning Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging • SEL integration • Revisit CHAMPS • Built in workshop time to plan
October 17, 2023 (8:30-3:30)	Instructional Clarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Intentions/Success Criteria • Lesson planning • Built in workshop time to plan with core content specialist
November 14, 2023 (8:30-3:30)	Professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing data using Performance Matters • Diagnostic/Formative Assessments/summative Assessments/Feedback
December 19, 2023 (8:30-3:30)	Virtual Check-in during Planning Time
January 16, 2024 (8:30-3:30)	Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXED • ESL / MLL
February 13, 2024 (8:30-3:30)	Professionalism / Assessment Part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality student feedback • Balanced Assessment Plan
March 19, 2024 (8:30-3:30)	Instruction / Reading across content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and writing strategies • Vocabulary strategies
April 16, 2024 (8:30-3:30)	Virtual check-in during Planning Time
May 14, 2024	End-of-Year Celebration