



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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New Licensure Designations Available to Educators Through Educator Career Continuum

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas educators now have the opportunity to earn leadership designations on their teaching license through the Educator Career Continuum.

Authorized by Act 294 of 2017, the Arkansas Department of Education launched the licensure system in January. Since then, approximately 100 educators have received one of four designations on their teaching license.

- **Early Career Professional Educator:** This designation applies to a first-time Standard License, recognizing first-time licensees early in their career. Beginning this fall, first-time licensees will have the opportunity to earn the designation. At the time of license renewal, Early Career Professional Educators may be eligible to receive one of the other designations. [1] [SEP]
- **Career Professional Educator:** The most common designation available, educators with this designation have demonstrated a strong commitment to the teaching profession. In addition to having at least three years of licensed teaching experience, educators who receive this designation must have received and provided documentation that they were rated an Effective Teacher on their most recent summative evaluation.
- **Lead Professional Educator:** This designation is available to accomplished educators who seek leadership roles without leaving the classroom. For example, they may lead professional learning among staff, provide mentoring, be actively involved in committee decisions, and improve community relations and support. [1] [SEP]
- **Master Professional Educator:** Educators with this designation are recognized as high achievers in the field of education. Not only do they make contributions to education outside of the school environment at regional, state, and national levels, they elevate the teaching profession through recruitment, teacher support, and advocacy.

“We are very excited about the implementation of the new Educator Career Continuum,” ADE Deputy Commissioner Dr. Ivy Pfeffer said. “Through this new opportunity, more students will have access to Arkansas’ most effective educators. These educators now have additional opportunities to grow professionally and lead without ever having to leave the classroom. Developed by teachers, the continuum also gives districts more flexibility to utilize teacher strengths in a way that best improves student learning. The continuum is not a hierarchical structure, but rather a continuance of levels that recognize teachers for effectively teaching their content while leading other adults and promoting

collective leadership models in our schools. The possibilities are endless with the continuum, and we look forward to seeing the benefits that come from these new designations."

School districts have a variety of opportunities to effectively utilize Lead and Master Professional Educators. Act 532 of 2019 allows for the use of categorical National School Lunch funds to be used to support levels of differentiated compensation that increase classroom teacher salaries based on a tiered system of licensure and to support teacher leaders.

Approximately 30 educators from ADE's Teacher Leader Advisory Group met multiple times over the last year to help develop the criteria for each of the designations. Comprised of teachers who serve as leaders in their schools, the TLAG's goal was to develop a continuum that was equitable, allowed for self-advocacy, promoted professional growth, and elevated the teaching profession. Instead of focusing on a tiered licensure system, the group developed a system that gives teachers the opportunity to choose the leadership pathways that are best for them.

The eligibility pathways for the Master Professional and Lead Professional designations are expanding. Currently, National Board Certified Teachers, Arkansas Teachers of the Year, Milken Educators, and Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching recipients are eligible to receive the Master Professional Educator designation. The Lead Professional Educator designation is currently only available to educators who participated in the 2018-2019 Lead Professional Educator pilot. More information will be provided as eligibility pathways increase for these two designations.

To learn more about the continuum, please visit <https://bit.ly/2XTEoHS>.

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