

Overview

During the 2018 Legislative session, the legislature passed [ACT 634](#) which requires the Department to issue teaching authorizations to substitute teachers in public schools, as well as to substitute teachers, teachers, and administrators in public charter schools and nonpublic schools who do not hold valid certificates. The Department is required to issue these authorizations provided the teacher or substitute teacher has not facilitated cheating, has not submitted fraudulent documentation to the Department, and has not been convicted of a felony or pled nolo contendere to a felony offense*.

Policy relative to teaching authorizations will live in [Bulletin 745-Louisiana Teaching Authorizations of School Personnel](#).

This document provides guidance to employing school systems regarding the implementation of this new law.

Criminal Background Check Process (CBC)

- Prior to employment, the [Louisiana employing school system is required to request a criminal background check \(CBC\)](#) through the Louisiana State Police (LSP) indicating the purpose of the background check is to **serve in schools**.
- If the applicant has any criminal background history, a copy of the CBC is automatically generated and sent to the LDOE. Louisiana employing school systems ARE NOT AUTHORIZED to send CBCs to the Louisiana Department of Education.
- The Department is working with Louisiana State Police to implement this new state law. If your school system is not set up to submit applicants' fingerprints electronically, please contact certification@la.gov to assist in receiving completed background checks in a timely manner.

Application Process

- School systems must begin applying for the teaching authorizations on August 16, 2018.
- Teaching authorizations are required for applicants who were hired on or after July 1, 2018.
- The teaching authorization application will reside on the HR page of Teach LA Live! and on teach Louisiana for Human Resources.
- The employing school system should submit the application for a teaching authorization via [Teach LA Live! Educator Certification Portal](#). To assist with this process, charter schools and nonpublic schools who are not registered for an HR account on Teach LA Live! may submit their initial teaching authorization applications via certification@la.gov while the employing system representative is in the process of registering and activating their certification portal accounts. The email subject line should include **"Teaching Authorization and hire date of the employee"**
- All applications will be evaluated in the order in which they are received.

**Note that Act 634 includes all felonies, which does not match the list of prohibited offenses for purposes of certification outlined in Bulletin 746. This means that the Department may be required to issue a teaching authorization to an individual who is not eligible to become certified.*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is a retired teacher hired to be a substitute required to hold a teaching authorization?

Answer: Yes, if the teacher's certificate is expired. If the teacher holds a valid certificate, the teaching authorization is not required. Note that the school system must conduct a criminal background check even if the teacher has a valid certificate.

Is a retired certified teacher hired to be a substitute in a critical shortage area required to hold a teaching authorization?

Answer: No, retired certified teachers hired for critical shortage positions are required per law to hold valid certificates. They therefore do not need to be issued a teaching authorization.

If an LEA hired a substitute on or after July 1, 2018, can that person begin working in August 2018 before a teaching authorization has been issued?

Answer: Yes, as long as the LEA has reviewed the criminal background check (CBC) and confirmed there were no felonies before being hired. The LEA must apply for a teaching authorization for the employed individual immediately on August 16.

Can the teaching authorization application for an individual already hired be expedited?

Answer: Yes, to assist employing school systems, we ask that you indicate on the application the individual is already hired and include the hire date. The processing of these applications will be expedited. Please email the applications to certification@la.gov and include "Teaching Authorization and hire date of the employee" as the subject line of the email.

Will there be a fee charged for the issuance of the teaching authorization?

Answer: No, there is no fee for the teaching authorization.

Are individuals hired by third party contractors for substitute teaching roles required to hold teaching authorizations for the roles outlined in ACT 634?

Answer: Yes, the school system hiring these individuals is required to apply for a teaching authorization for them.

What happens to a school governing authority if they do not comply with ACT 634?

Answer: If a school system knowingly hires an individual who has been convicted of a felony offense or who has pled nolo contendere to a felony offense, BESE may assess a civil fine against the governing authority, equal to the average yearly compensation for a public school teacher, inclusive of salary and benefits.