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When Micro Goes Macro: A Nationwide Review of States' Educator Micro- Credential Policies

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Education Policy & PreK-12 Education

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Our goal is to ensure that all students have access to highly-skilled educators who reflect the communities they serve and provide rigorous and relevant instruction to all students. Our team provides research, policy analysis, and field-building initiatives to help strengthen educator workforce policies and practices across the country.

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Executive Summary

States have been working to address increasing challenges in recruiting and retaining a sufficiently robust, diverse, and talented teacher workforce, particularly in the schools and subjects in which shortages have been long-standing. This report examines how states are attempting to leverage micro-credentials to improve the stability and capability of their elementary and secondary educator workforces and to promote better student outcomes.

This research builds upon the informal 2020 scan of state educator micro-credential policies in New America's comprehensive *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices* research report¹ by highlighting the explicit inclusion of micro-credentials in state educator policies in six areas—preparation, first-time certification, curated professional training, license renewal, additional endorsements, and licensure advancement.

Key findings include:

- Over 60 percent of states (32, including the District of Columbia) now *explicitly* allow or encourage the use of micro-credentials in at least one type of state educator policy,² a 23 percent increase from 2020.
- Just under half of these 32 states (14) incorporate educator micro-credentials in more than one of the six policy areas examined. Arkansas and Utah integrate educator micro-credentials in the greatest number of policy areas, with four each.
- As was the case in 2020, states are concentrating their micro-credential efforts on the average current teacher, rather than on preparing and credentialing new teachers or vetting the most expert educators for advancement opportunities.
 - The policy areas with the greatest inclusion of educator micro-credentials are satisfying **license renewal** requirements (15 states) and providing **professional learning on curated topics** (13 states).
 - Ten states are using micro-credentials in policies governing the earning of **additional license endorsements**, typically in chronic teacher shortage areas.
 - The policy area with the greatest percentage increase relative to 2020 was **initial and first-time professional certification** (10

states, up from zero). Most of these policies are for individuals teaching on a temporary certificate who must meet additional requirements to make the mandatory shift to a professional credential.

- The number of states allowing educators to use micro-credentials to meet **licensure advancement** requirements showed little change (six states, up from five in 2020), likely because few states offer advanced licenses and endorsement options in general.
- Utah is the first and only state to incorporate micro-credentials in **educator preparation program approval** policies.

The table below offers a side-by-side comparison of state policy tallies, overall and by category, from 2020 to the present.

Table 1 | Tally of States with Policies Incorporating Educator Micro-Credentials: 2020 to 2025

State Policy Type	Number of States	
	November 2020	March 2025
Educator Preparation Program Governance	0	1
Initial and First-Time Professional Certification	0	10
Overall Professional Learning*	17	23
→ To meet License Renewal Requirements*	3	15
→ Ongoing*	General: 15	Curated: 13
Additional Endorsements	8	10
Licensure Advancement	5	6
Total States with Any Policy	26	32

*Note that while tallies for the individual “ongoing professional learning” and “license renewal” policy areas are not directly comparable from 2020 to 2025, the combined “overall professional learning” tally is more closely comparable. See Appendix D for details.

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The expanded adoption of micro-credentials in state education policy represents a positive shift in the commitment of states to seek out innovative, high-potential approaches for developing, credentialing, and retaining educators with the skills to meet students’ needs.

But for states to harness the full potential of micro-credentials as a tool for productive educator professional learning and for determining educator readiness for specific instructional or administrative roles, they must do two things: (1) Put systems and processes in place to ensure the quality of micro-credential offerings, and (2) ensure that policies are designed to incentivize educator engagement with micro-credentials. For the first, states must ensure that their policies only support high-quality micro-credential offerings that incorporate a rigorous, evidence-driven process for educators to *apply research-backed competencies in a real-world setting*. For the second, states must consider the role of micro-credentials within the context of broader necessary reforms to their educator policy systems. For example, micro-credentials could provide teachers with more opportunities for career advancement and increased compensation that do not require moving into administration, and thus aid in teacher retention.

More details on how states can execute on these recommendations can be found in the full report, as well as in New America's *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: Model State Policy Guide*.³

Introduction

In the 2022–2023 school year, one in eight of all vacant teaching positions in U.S. public schools went unfilled or were filled by individuals who were not fully certified to teach the grade(s) and/or subject(s) they were assigned to.⁴ Without talented educators—the most important in-school factor in students’ academic and long-term success⁵—our students will continue to struggle to reach their full potential.⁶

One way states are attempting to address school workforce issues and improve students’ educational experiences and outcomes is by integrating micro-credential offerings into their policies to attract, credential, develop, and retain educators.

Why micro-credentials? First, many of the tools traditionally used to vet educators’ qualifications to enter, remain, or advance in the profession (e.g., tests of general knowledge⁷ and credits/degrees earned,⁸ etc.) can be expensive and burdensome despite weak evidence that they benefit educators’ daily work. This approach ultimately restricts the quantity, quality, and diversity of the educator workforce. High-quality micro-credentials, on the other hand, offer a low-cost way for educators to *concretely demonstrate* that they possess the competencies required to enter the profession, and to retain or enhance their professional credentials and roles.⁹ For example, high-quality micro-credentials offer educators a more accessible and evidence-driven option for obtaining professional recognition and rewards, such as higher-paid teacher leader roles, than doling out money for master’s degrees.

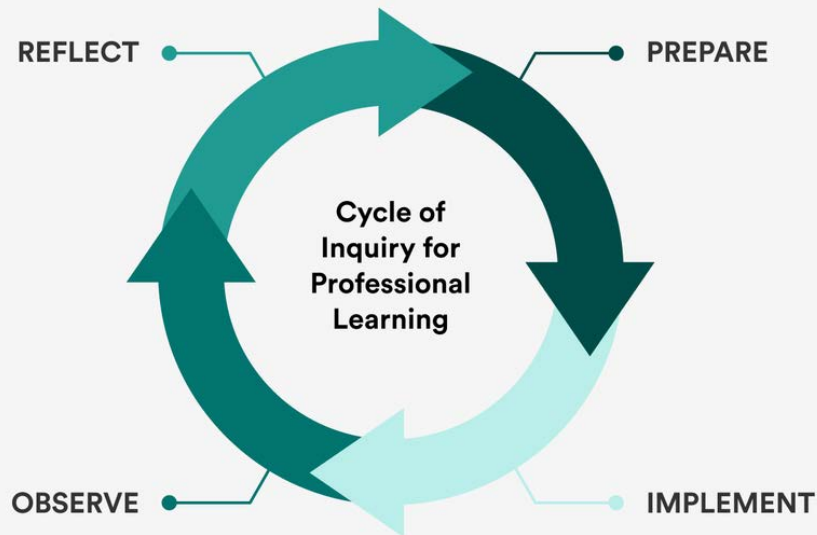
Additionally, the process required to earn a high-quality micro-credential can simultaneously improve educators’ job effectiveness as well as their satisfaction with their professional development opportunities, further boosting the quantity and quality of the workforce. In a national survey, nearly two-thirds of teachers reported being only somewhat satisfied or not satisfied with the professional development (PD) opportunities they were offered,¹⁰ which—despite federal efforts to get schools to shift to more evidence-based approaches—still often come as one-size-fits-all, short-term passive trainings, without opportunities to test drive the new information or skill, follow-up to see if or how they are applying the new concept in their classrooms, or assistance to help them do so successfully. These traditional types of PD opportunities often reward time spent rather than demonstrated professional learning and growth.¹¹

Conversely, the cycle of inquiry process baked into earning a high-quality micro-credential requires and rewards *actively applying knowledge and skills in the educator's specific school context and reflecting on the implementation and outcomes*. Simplistically, such a cycle of inquiry includes four basic steps¹²:

1. **Reflect** on instructional practice, including by reviewing student data, and identify the intended goal of changes to practice.
2. **Prepare** ideas for how to modify practice, informed by research and evidence of what is most likely to achieve the goal.
3. **Implement** and test out changes in practice in the classroom.
4. **Observe** what resulted from the change in practice, including by reviewing data.

Then the process starts over, with educators reflecting on what they learned from implementing the change in practice, why it did or did not meet the intended goal, and how they might modify their practice further to improve outcomes (see Figure 1). For more details on the process for earning a high-quality micro-credential, and the entities playing roles within the micro-credentialing ecosystem, see [Appendix A](#).

Figure 1 | A Cycle of Inquiry Promotes Professional Learning



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Allison Ball, a teacher in Kingsport City Schools who completed a micro-credential through the Digital Promise platform and responded to its 2018 survey about the experience, said: “I would do a micro-credential again because it has helped me to not only reflect better and be more intentional and thoughtful, but it’s actually given me practical choice in what I get to do and pursue.”¹³

Not only do educators experience this type of learning-by-doing as more relevant, but research shows this active learning approach to be most likely to translate into improvements in instructional practice and advance student learning.¹⁴ And because of their “micro” nature, micro-credentials can help educators break down ambitious goals into manageable chunks, and provide a sense of accomplishment when each milestone is reached. For example, Rachel Heaton, a teacher in Kingsport City Schools who completed Digital Promise’s educator micro-credential survey, said: “While we were working on this micro-credential in my classroom, I was learning and my students were learning as well. We had multiple opportunities to achieve the skill in the micro-credential together. Then, as I worked through that, I was able to see evidence of their growth and then use that as the evidence [toward earning] my micro-credential.”¹⁵

For a definition of the characteristics of a high-quality micro-credential, see the box below.

→ WHAT IS A MICRO-CREDENTIAL, AND WHAT MAKES A MICRO-CREDENTIAL HIGH-QUALITY?

A *micro-credential* is a relatively new term in education, and it has been used to label a wide array of online activities and tools. Micro-credentials are like other types of credentials—such as degrees or diplomas—in that they are a way for individuals to signal to current or potential employers that they possess relevant competencies, and individuals often engage in learning activities in order to earn them. Like other credentials, micro-credentials can be designed to reflect differing levels of expertise on a specific topic, but individuals must demonstrate relevant knowledge in order to earn them.

However, micro-credentials *differ* from credentials like degrees and diplomas in a few ways:¹⁶

- They recognize a small, discrete competency rather than a broad set of skills.
- They may not offer candidates instruction on how to develop the stated competency.¹⁷
- They may be agnostic as to when or how the candidate developed the competency.
- They are typically awarded in the form of a digital badge.¹⁸

A *high-quality* micro-credential offering encourages an inquiry-based learning process¹⁹ (see Figure 1) and meets five conditions:

1. The measured competency is right-sized, precisely named, demonstrable, and evidence-driven.

2. All accompanying resources are relevant, research-backed, and practicable.
3. Candidates are required to submit robust evidence of *applying* the competency to a set of required practical tasks.
4. Well-trained assessors review candidates' submitted evidence of the competency via a transparent, reliable, and valid process.
5. The final earning decision and associated feedback is communicated in a clear, timely manner.

While educator micro-credentials have been available for a decade, very little research has been done on how to maximize their potential. In 2021, New America published the most comprehensive report available on the topic, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*,²⁰ and the companion *Model State Policy Guide*²¹ to inform education leaders' understanding of this emerging tool. In addition to potential benefits of this new tool, we found there to be significant challenges to developing and implementing *high-quality* educator micro-credential offerings. For example, while the number of offerings labeled as “micro-credentials” was growing rapidly, no common mechanism existed for vetting quality, and many did not reflect the characteristics of high-quality educator micro-credentials outlined above.

The report highlighted how state and local policies influence educators' willingness to attempt to earn micro-credentials, as well as their level of earning success. The report also provided a tally of states that included micro-credentials within different categories of educator policies. We found that 26 states explicitly referenced or encouraged the use of micro-credentials in at least one category of educator policy.

This report builds upon our earlier research and policy recommendations by examining how state policy on educator micro-credentials has changed over the past four years and providing recommendations for further state action.

State Policy Scan Methodology

We performed five actions for this state policy scan:

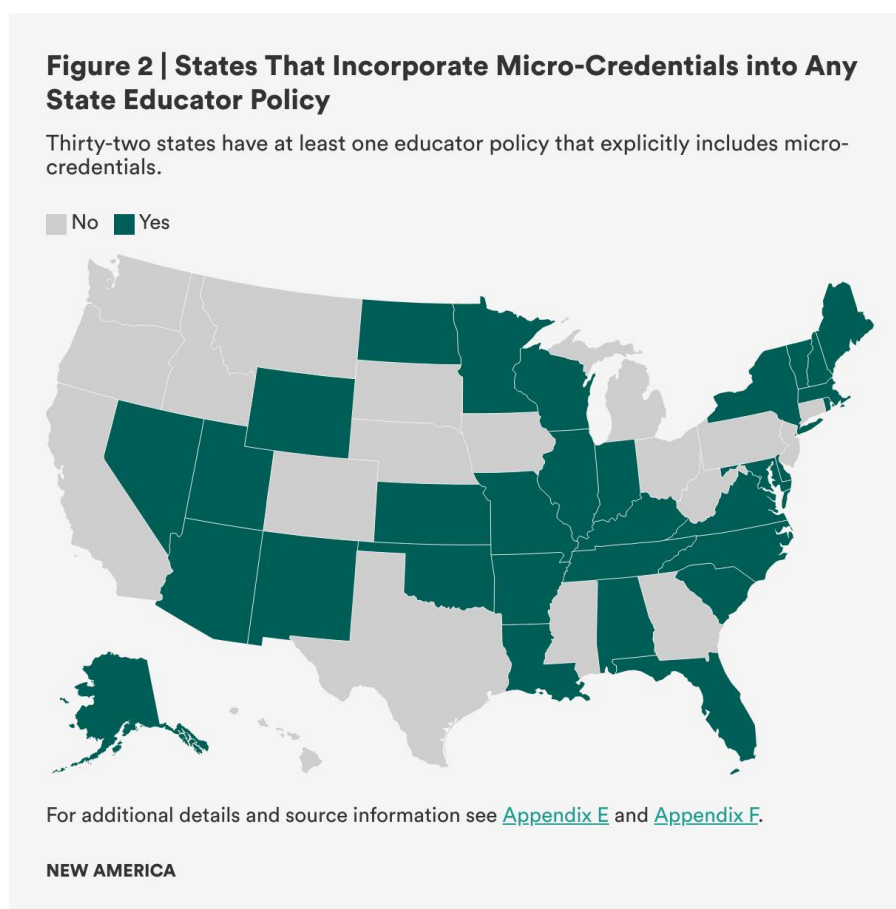
- Reviewed statutes, regulations, and websites of state education agencies governing educator preparation, credentialing, and professional learning in all 50 states plus Washington, DC,²² for references to educator micro-credentials.
- Performed online searches to identify educator micro-credentials offered or financially supported by state education agencies.
- Interviewed the three major providers of educator micro-credentials and other policy experts for insights on how states are using educator micro-credentials. see [Appendix B](#) for full list of interviews
- Categorized each state policy that included a reference to micro-credentials for educators in one of six ways: educator preparation program governance, initial credentialing, curated professional development, license renewal, endorsements, or license advancement.
- Contacted each state education agency via email to request verification of our search results.

A state was deemed to have a statewide policy for educator micro-credentials in one or more of the six educator policy categories listed above if we could locate evidence that a state entity *explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials for that specific policy purpose*. Examples of encouraging micro-credentials include creating, funding creation of, and/or publishing micro-credentials for educators, promoting micro-credentials in state-developed or funded materials, or offering financial incentives to educators engaging with micro-credentials. States that tacitly allow the use of educator micro-credentials (e.g., by accepting micro-credentials as a form of professional learning that satisfies relicensure requirements, but not explicitly stating this in any public documentation) were not deemed to have a statewide policy.²³ Although states sometimes distinguish between the terms *certification* and *license* (or only use one of these terms), these terms are used interchangeably for the purpose of this analysis. More detailed information about how the authors assessed the existence of state policy in each of the six identified categories, as well as example scenarios, can be found in [Appendix C](#).

We did not attempt to assess whether states' use of the micro-credentials label aligned with the definition of high-quality micro-credentials offered here. If states labeled something a micro-credential, we accepted it as such, despite the fact that states sometimes appeared to use the term to refer to professional development offered in a didactic format and/or with a focus on assessing knowledge rather than demonstrating real-world skills.²⁴ Conversely, some state education agency staff shared that they have license renewal policies that explicitly encourage or require the kind of cycle of inquiry at the heart of high-quality micro-credentials, even though the state does not explicitly use the term *micro-credentials* or offer any type of recognition for completing the cycle of inquiry process.

Overall Findings

As the map in Figure 2 shows, the majority of states (32, including the District of Columbia) now explicitly allow or encourage the use of micro-credentials in at least one of the six types of educator policy examined—up from 26 in 2020, a 23 percent increase.²⁵



A little less than half (14) of the 32 states with any type of educator micro-credential policy are incorporating micro-credentials in two or more policy areas. Figure 3 shows how many of the following six categories of educator policies each state incorporates micro-credentials within:

1. Complying with state pre-service **educator preparation** program approval guidelines.
2. Fulfilling requirements for **initial or first-time professional educator credentials**.

3. Providing **curated professional development**.
4. Fulfilling professional learning requirements for educator **license renewal**.
5. Fulfilling requirements for **additional endorsements** for current educators.
6. Fulfilling requirements for an **advanced license or endorsement** for current educators.

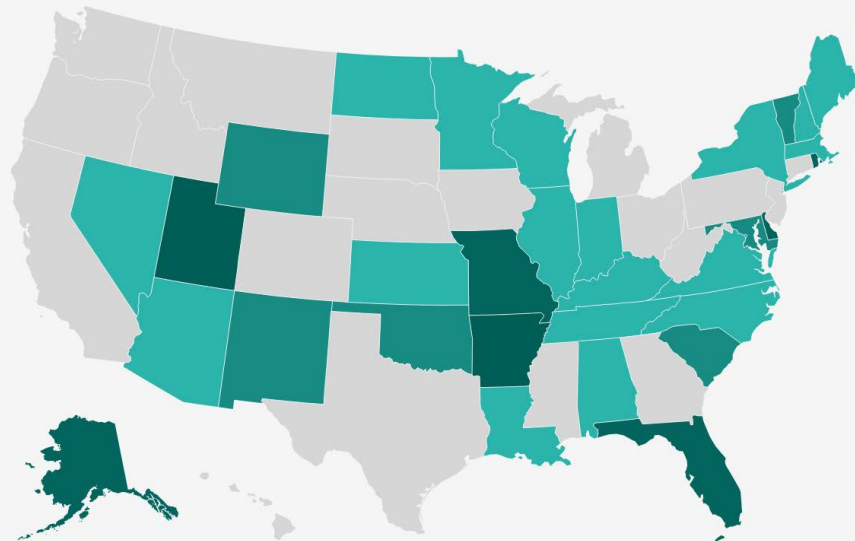
See [Appendix C](#) for a glossary and examples for each of these six policy categories, [Appendix E](#) for a state-by-state summary of results, and [Appendix F](#) for more details on each state's policies.

Figure 3 | Number of Educator Policy Types Where States Integrate Micro-Credentials

The majority of states including micro-credentials in educator policies are doing so in only one of the six policy areas examined.

Total Number of Policies

0 1 2 3 4



For additional details and source information see [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix F](#).

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Most states that are incorporating educator micro-credentials are doing so in one (18 states) or two (7 states) of the six policy areas examined. Five states—Delaware, Alaska, Florida, Missouri, and Rhode Island—are each leveraging micro-credentials in three policy areas, while Arkansas and Utah explicitly allow them to be used in four.

While a greater number of policies indicates how widespread state adoption of educator micro-credentials is, it does not imply that a state is making better decisions about using educator micro-credentials. How policies are designed, how many educators are being reached with the policies, and how educator micro-credentials are vetted and implemented are more important than the number of ways they are integrated into the educator pipeline. See the final section of this report for more discussion of educator micro-credential quality and implementation.

Detailed Policy Category Findings

This section provides a more detailed look at the findings from our most current state scan for each of the six educator policy areas reviewed. See [Appendix C](#) for a glossary and examples for how policies were categorized in each of the six policy areas, [Appendix E](#) for a summary of policy results by state, and [Appendix F](#) for additional details on each state's policies.

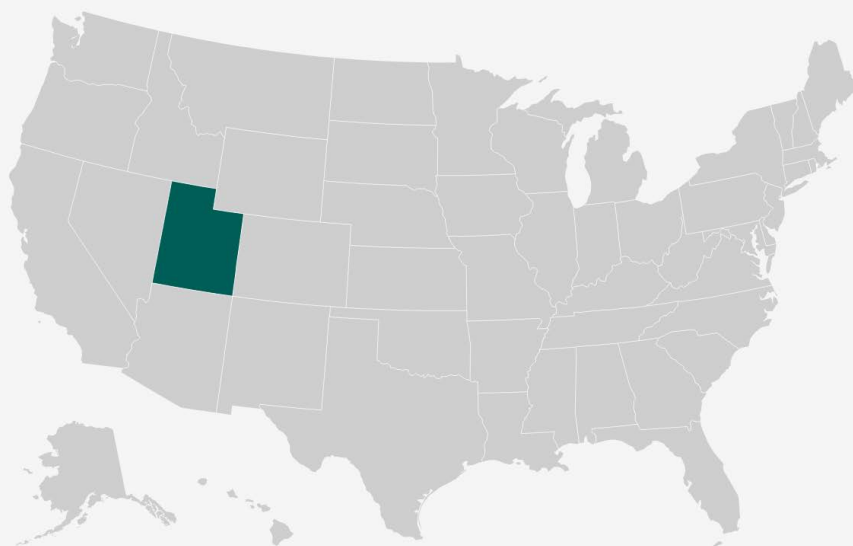
Educator Preparation Program Governance

As Figure 4 indicates, Utah is the only state with an explicit policy encouraging the use of micro-credentials within educator preparation programs (EPPs).²⁶ As part of the process of obtaining state approval to operate, Utah requires all EPPs—including those based within and outside institutions of higher education—to submit forms explaining how they are measuring each required competency in their candidates, with micro-credentials explicitly listed as an example method for competency demonstration.²⁷ Additionally, the form that Utah's university-based EPPs must submit to the state board of education to be approved to offer specific endorsements lists micro-credentials as one example of how candidates can demonstrate the required competencies.²⁸

Figure 4 | States That Integrate Micro-Credentials into Educator Preparation Governance

Utah is the only state with a policy explicitly specifying that educator preparation providers can use micro-credentials.

■ No ■ Yes



For additional details and source information see [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix F](#).

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Initial and First-Time Professional Certification

Ten states have policies explicitly allowing, encouraging, or requiring the use of micro-credentials for obtaining an initial or first-time professional educator credential: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Utah (see Figure 5). Missouri is the only state with a statewide policy for initial credentialing of local administrators using micro-credentials.

States vary significantly in how explicitly and deeply micro-credentials are incorporated in their policies. South Carolina requires individuals who receive initial certification to teach through the Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation pathway to complete micro-credentials to progress to the professional certificate, and the only avenue to earning an Initial Administrator Certificate for Special Education Director, Kindergarten-Grade 12 in Missouri is by completing approved micro-credentials. Alabama, Arkansas, and Delaware allow teachers with temporary certification to earn micro-credentials in lieu of passing a multiple-choice exam, although in

Rhode Island and Utah's policies are more light touch, where micro-credentials are explicitly mentioned as an option but not encouraged. In Rhode Island, teachers with an initial credential must engage in professional learning to earn a professional credential, and state policy indicates that micro-credentials can count as professional learning. Utah mentions micro-credentials as one way that universities can have prospective educators demonstrate the competencies necessary to earn their credential, as well as any specific endorsement(s).



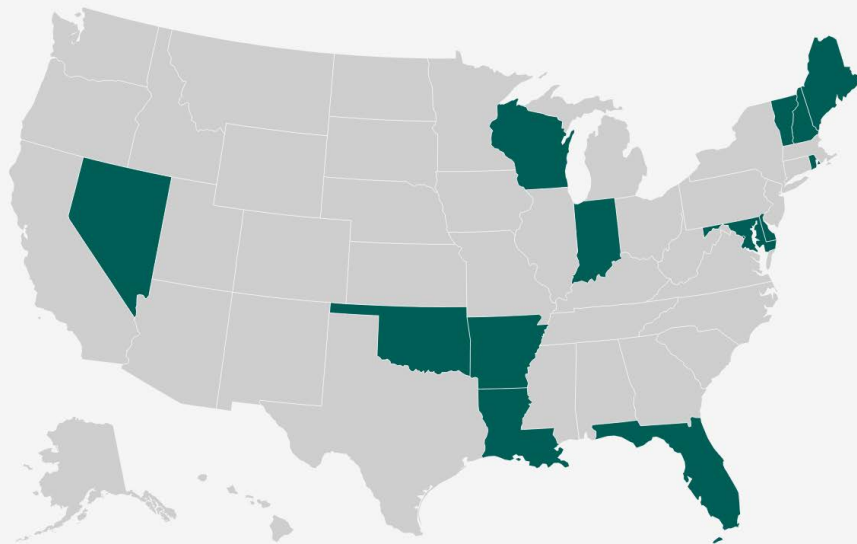
Curated Professional Development in State Priority Areas

As shown in Figure 6, 13 states have curated educator micro-credentials to deliver training and promote professional learning on specific topics.³⁰ Within the states offering this type of targeted professional development, the most prevalent focus areas are literacy (five states), educating students with disabilities (three states), computer science (two states), and educating English learners (two states). Because these professional learning opportunities are typically optional for educators but are priority areas for the states, most states are offering these at no cost to participants. Some states offer a stipend to educators completing these micro-credentials (Delaware, Florida, Maine, and Oklahoma) and/or explicitly offer credits toward relicensure (Delaware and Florida).

Figure 6 | States That Curate Micro-Credentials for Topic-Specific Professional Development

Thirteen states curate a set of micro-credentials to promote educator professional learning on topics of state priority.

■ No ■ Yes



For additional details and source information see [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix F](#).

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License Renewal

The most common way that states currently include micro-credentials in policy is by explicitly allowing educators to count them toward professional development requirements for license renewal. Among the 15 states with this type of policy (see Figure 7), there is wide variation, both in terms of which educator micro-credentials count toward relicensure credit and in how much credit educators receive for earning a micro-credential.

In many states, any micro-credential offered by a state-approved provider of professional development is eligible for relicensure credits, but Alaska provides a list of three specific entities whose micro-credentials are approved for this purpose, while Illinois vets each individual micro-credential offered by state-approved providers to determine which can count toward license renewal.

State license renewal requirement policies typically require educators to accrue a certain number of professional development credits (which hold various names and are measured in various ways) over a specified period of time. Some state policies say that micro-credentials are allowed but are silent about what value they hold in the state's license renewal currency. Some states, such as Illinois, indicate that the same policy holds for all types of professional learning activities, typically where one clock hour of attendance is the equivalent of one professional development hour.

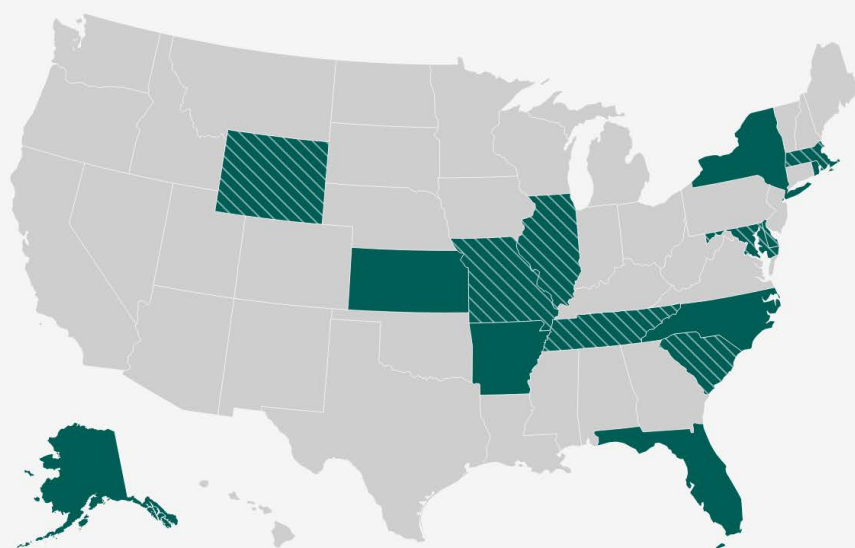
But a growing number of states assign a specific value in the state's relicensure credit currency for each micro-credential as part of this process. Seven states—Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wyoming—take this step to ensure that educators understand a micro-credential's worth within state license renewal policy. In South Carolina, local education agencies (LEAs) have authority to determine how much value to give micro-credentials earned by their educators in the state's relicensure currency, but the state department of education offers LEAs a recommendation. Massachusetts staff members acknowledge that individual micro-credentials are not all created equal, but they provide educators with a rough sense of what value to expect for earning them while differentiating their value in the state's license renewal currency.

It is worth noting that in addition to the states with an explicit micro-credential policy for the purpose of license renewal, there are several additional states that implicitly allow their use by including entities that offer micro-credentials on their list of approved professional development providers. As a result, in many states educators can obtain license renewal credit by completing micro-credentials through the National Education Association's Certification Bank, which the NEA offers to members and affiliate members at no cost.³¹

Figure 7 | States Integrating Micro-Credentials for Professional Development Required for License Continuation and Renewal

Fifteen states explicitly allow educators to complete micro-credentials as part of fulfilling state license renewal requirements.

■ No ■ Yes // *Defined Exchange Rate



*State that defines a specific exchange rate for converting earned micro-credentials to the currency used in its license renewal policy (e.g., one micro-credential = five continuing education units) or otherwise explains how earning micro-credentials counts toward meeting requirements for license renewal (e.g., one hour of any type of professional learning activity = one relicensure credit).

For additional details and source information see [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix F](#).

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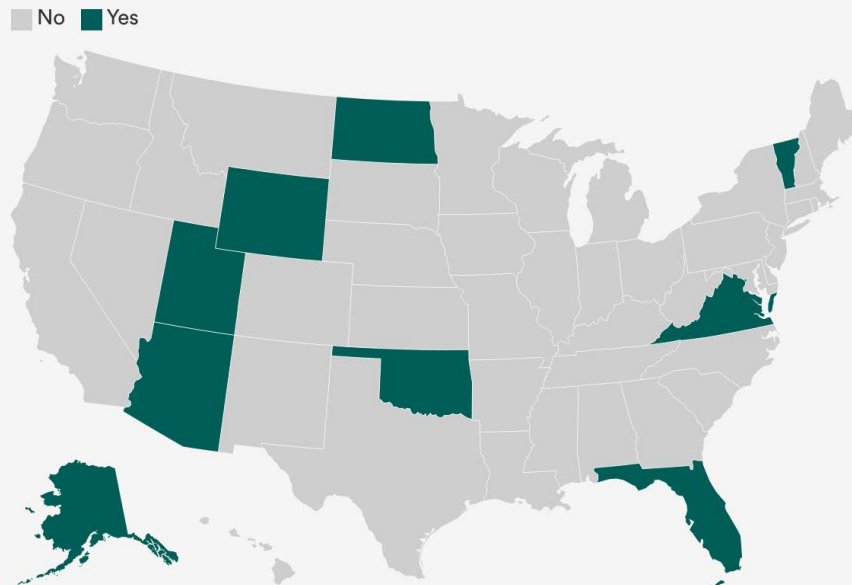
Additional Endorsements

Another way that states integrate micro-credentials into policy is by allowing educators to obtain endorsements in additional instructional areas via micro-credentials. Sometimes this solely entails a requirement to earn one or more stacks of complementary micro-credentials in a given subject area, as is the case with North Dakota’s computer science endorsement.³² Other times, in addition to earning one or more micro-credentials, educators must engage in additional activities, such as passing college-level courses and/or passing a state licensing exam, as is the case in the District of Columbia.³³

As shown in Figure 8, 10 states now allow at least some endorsements to be earned through micro-credentials. In three states—Alaska, Utah, and Wyoming—any additional endorsement can be earned through micro-credentials. In Arizona, micro-credentials are an option for earning a handful of different endorsements. In the remaining six—District of Columbia, Florida, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Vermont, and Virginia—micro-credentials are designated for use toward one or two specific endorsements, typically in shortage areas such as reading specialists, computer science, special education, and English for non-native speakers.

Figure 8 | States Integrating Micro-Credentials for Additional Endorsements for Current Educators

Ten states integrate educator micro-credentials in policies dictating how to obtain additional endorsements in specific topic areas.



For additional details and source information see [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix F](#).

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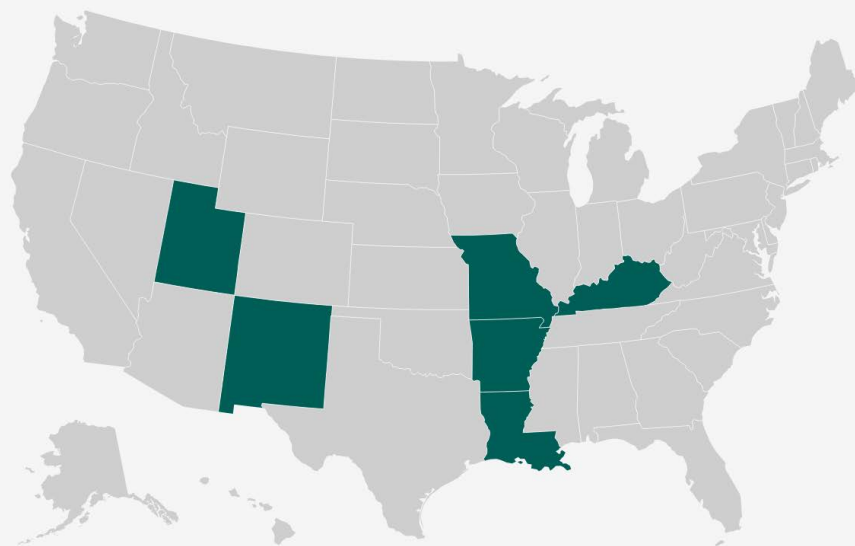
License Advancement

As Figure 9 shows, six states incorporate micro-credentials as part of policies governing the earning of an advanced license: Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, and Utah. The small number of states with this type of policy is likely because many states do not have clearly delineated licensure advancement pathways for educators, such as a separate license or endorsement to move from being a classroom teacher to a teacher leader.³⁴

Figure 9 | States Integrating Micro-Credentials for Licensure Advancement

Six states include educator micro-credentials in policies for advancing a professional license.

■ No ■ Yes



For additional details and source information see [Appendix E](#) and [Appendix F](#).

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Comparison to 2020 Findings

As the number of states with educator policies or other initiatives that explicitly mention micro-credentials has increased from 26 to 32 over the past four years, the biggest upticks in adoption of educator micro-credentials have been in initial and first-time professional certification and overall professional learning, whether for curated professional development or license renewal.

Similar to our findings in 2020, states are concentrating their educator micro-credential policy efforts on the average current educator, rather than on preparing and credentialing new educators or vetting the most expert educators for advancement opportunities. Due to changes in our methodology (see [Appendix D](#)), exact comparisons of the individual ongoing professional learning and license renewal categories are not possible, but looking at ongoing professional learning and license renewal in combination shows a 35 percent increase in 2025 policies incorporating educator micro-credentials relative to 2020 (23 versus 17). Conducting an apples-to-apples comparison of license renewal policies using the 2020 methodology—where only states with policies specifying exactly what value micro-credentials have in the state’s relicensure currency were counted—the 2025 state policy tally would be eight,³⁵ still more than double that of 2020.

However, the most growth in the use of micro-credential policies was in initial and first-time professional credentialing—from zero to 10 states—due to intensified state efforts to ensure that teachers with temporary credentials have a path to demonstrating their value and continuing in the profession. It will be important to follow these efforts, as prior New America research found that most novice teachers had difficulty successfully completing high-quality educator micro-credentials without additional support.³⁶

While the state policy tally in categories such as additional endorsements have stayed relatively static, subtle shifts have been occurring that are not apparent from the totals alone. For example, while most states that incorporate micro-credentials for additional endorsements still only do so in one or two targeted shortage areas (similar to 2020 findings), three states—Alaska, Utah, and Wyoming—now have policies authorizing the use of micro-credentials within *any* state-approved pathway to earning additional endorsements, which no states did in 2020. That being said, none of these states have developed state-approved pathways for all endorsement areas that include micro-credentials.

Table 1 offers a side-by-side comparison of state educator micro-credential policies relative to 2020 for each of the six policy categories examined, as well as the total number of states with any policy.

Table 1 | Tally of States with Policies Incorporating Educator Micro-Credentials: 2020 to 2025

State Policy Type	Number of States	
	November 2020	March 2025
Educator Preparation Program Governance	0	1
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Additional Endorsements	8	10
Licensure Advancement	5	6
Total States with Any Policy	26	32

*Note that while tallies for the individual “ongoing professional learning” and “license renewal” policy areas are not directly comparable from 2020 to 2025, the combined “overall professional learning” tally is more closely comparable. See Appendix D for details.

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Discussion

New America's national scan of state educator policies shows a moderate upswing in the number of states encouraging or allowing the use of something labeled as *micro-credentials* in at least one policy area. This tally rose despite our exclusion of states that have not provided funding for implementation of their laws authorizing educator micro-credential initiatives (such as Virginia and Texas), and of states which tacitly allow educators to use micro-credentials to satisfy license renewal requirements but have no policy explicitly stating this (such as in the District of Columbia and Pennsylvania) (see [Appendix F](#) for more details) Within the 32 states incorporating micro-credentials, just under half (14) are leveraging them across two or more educator policy areas, indicating that the depth of micro-credentials' inclusion within states is increasing as well.

Furthermore, the number of states with these policies will likely soon increase further, as a handful of states are in the process of revisiting policies to incorporate micro-credentials or similar tools to encourage demonstration of teacher competency. For example, staff at the Idaho Department of Education shared plans to embed micro-credentials in the process for career and technical education teachers to make the mandatory progression from a temporary certificate to a professional certificate, and staff at the Vermont Agency of Education shared that the state's Professional Standards Board has developed a draft policy which would allow teacher candidates who come close to passing the content area licensure exam to demonstrate competency in the content area through alternative means, including micro-credentials. Additionally, Alabama passed a law in 2024 requiring the State Superintendent of Education to establish a system for approving professional learning for teacher license renewal that incorporates micro-credentials, and Mississippi is adopting a professional learning approach that does not use the term *micro-credential* but nonetheless reflects many of the characteristics of high-quality micro-credential offerings.³⁷

However, the educator policy landscape is still evolving with regards to micro-credentials, and most states are only dipping a toe in the water, rather than diving in. Many states initiate their policies as pilots and/or in a specific area of need, such as with Indiana's pilot program to provide a small number of current educators with computer science training.³⁸ And most states are not mandating the use of educator micro-credentials but offering them as one of several available options to meet a given policy's requirements. This type of flexibility is nearly always the case for states' initial certification and license renewal policies, which tend to provide educators with multiple options for fulfilling requirements, but is less likely for curated, topic-specific professional development opportunities, such as with Maryland's science of reading micro-

credential. This means that most educators engaging with micro-credentials are doing so voluntarily, and it is unclear how many are choosing to do so. To encourage uptake, a handful of states are offering micro-credentials at no cost to educators as an incentive, with a few even offering a stipend for completing micro-credentials on a topic deemed of importance to the state.

Additionally, even though more states have explicit policies for educator micro-credentials in every category analyzed than in 2020, a few states that had integrated micro-credentials at the time of our 2020 scan have since walked them back. For example, in Tennessee, pilot programs were not continued or scaled up, as priorities shifted with new state leadership and the onset of COVID-19. However, the state continues to use educator micro-credentials in other policy areas. And Washington state's legislature passed a law prohibiting the state education agency from adopting or implementing educator micro-credential policies beyond its initial pilot before the pilot had concluded.³⁹

That said, states' increased interest in leveraging micro-credentials to reach their educator policy goals is generally a positive one, as it reflects a commitment to seek out innovative, high-potential approaches for developing, credentialing, and retaining talented educators who have the skills to meet students' needs.

Yet it is not the micro-credential *label* that is critical for addressing the core challenges states face in strengthening their educator workforces. Instead what is most important is providing opportunities for educators to engage in a rigorous cycle of inquiry and to develop and apply competencies in a real-world setting. While not the focus of our research, there is little evidence that most states are putting sufficient guardrails in place to ensure the consistently high level of micro-credential quality necessary to improve teachers' skills.

In fact, a closer look at some states' micro-credential offerings indicates that they are more akin to completing a handful of online courses than they are a way to learn and practice relevant competencies within a specific school or classroom context. Online modules might be an appropriate way for states to ensure that every educator is exposed to and retains baseline information on a certain topic. But even if these modules require a multiple-choice assessment for completion, the results provide no insight into whether educators know how to apply any information learned in their work with students, whether they are attempting to do so, or how effectively they are doing so.

Without a vetted, trusted process for determining which micro-credential offerings are high quality, policymakers, schools, and educators alike remain in the dark about which ones are likely to add value to educators' professional practice, and states will fail to harness the potential of micro-credentials for improving teaching and learning.⁴⁰ The Micro-Credentials Partnership of

States—convened by digiLEARN and RTI, and consisting of Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Wyoming⁴¹—attempted to address this by developing quality assurance standards (QAS) for educator micro-credentials and an accompanying rubric for assessing micro-credentials against those standards in 2023.⁴² North Carolina has officially adopted the QAS rubric as its tool for determining which micro-credentials hold currency within state educator policies, and the other three states are also beginning to incorporate it as a micro-credential vetting tool.⁴³ While the QAS tool holds promise, further validation and research of the rubric, and training for those using it, are needed to know whether it can reliably and fairly vet the quality of educator micro-credentials.

Additionally, without shifts in the design of state and local policies—for example, providing teachers with clear incentives for engaging with micro-credentials, such as more opportunities for career advancement and increased compensation that do not require moving into administration—states cannot harness some of the most powerful aspects of high-quality micro-credentials. For states to reap the positive potential impacts of micro-credentials on their educator workforces, they must first put systems and processes in place to ensure the quality of micro-credential offerings, and then ensure that policies are designed to incentivize educator engagement with them.

Conclusions and Recommendations

With smart policy design and implementation, high-quality micro-credentials offer states an innovative tool for improving the stability and capability of their educator workforces that models the type of personalized, competency-based learning they increasingly strive for with students.

For prospective and novice educators, high-quality micro-credentials offer a way to demonstrate skill-based readiness for the classroom to preparation and credentialing entities, as well as future employers, so states can remove unnecessary barriers to entering and remaining in the profession while maintaining high standards for student learning. For current educators, high-quality micro-credentials offer the ability to engage in relevant, active professional learning that helps them help their students, instead of one-size-fits-all workshops, as well as straightforward opportunities to showcase their skills to advance in their careers. For schools, they offer the prospect of more satisfied, more effective staff members and fewer vacancies. And for students and their families, high-quality micro-credentials help the educators leading their learning better support them in meeting their full potential.

In order for micro-credentials to produce these positive outcomes, states should consider six actions, which draw upon New America's extensive prior research on educator micro-credentials.⁴⁴

1. Develop a formal, rigorous, and transparent process for ensuring the quality of educator micro-credentials. Educators, LEAs, and policymakers must be confident that engaging in a given micro-credential is a valuable use of educators' time, and that the attainment of a given micro-credential is an accurate indicator of an educator's competency in that area. At the heart of quality lies a **focus on learning and applying desired competencies in educators' daily practice, rather than on coursework or seat time.** Without this crucial foundation, the potential of micro-credentials to positively influence these aspects of the educator pipeline will be lost.

State spotlight: Illinois,⁴⁵ North Carolina,⁴⁶ and Wyoming⁴⁷ are examples of states trying to explicitly define micro-credential quality and review potential micro-credential offerings relative to those standards before they can satisfy state policy.

2. Ensure that the design of educator policies involving micro-credentials, including any associated incentives, is clearly driven by the intended goal of the specific policy, and revisit policies that are not achieving their goals. For example, the primary objective of using micro-credentials for ongoing professional learning is to *develop* educators' skill in their current roles, while the primary objective of using them for advancement

is *validating* educators' skills for entry into a new role. As a result, two different but complementary approaches to incentives and currency will be needed to effectively shift behavior, and support educator success.

State spotlight: As an early adopter of educator micro-credentials, Arkansas currently incorporates them in four different policy areas and has designed each policy to reflect its specific goals (e.g., for professional learning vs. advancement).

3. Communicate with educators clearly—and repeatedly—about what high-quality micro-credentials are and how they can help them and the students they serve. The existence of a policy does not necessarily translate into uptake of a policy. To be motivated to earn micro-credentials, educators need to understand the distinction between the micro-credential itself (which, like any other credential, is what is earned upon completion of the required activity) and the process they will engage in to earn it (which should reflect the best evidence and practices on adult learning), as well as the benefits they and their students stand to reap from each of these. It is also important to clarify the difference between micro-credentials and digital badges, which some educators perceive as meaningless, or even faddish.⁴⁸

State spotlight: Arkansas,⁴⁹ Delaware,⁵⁰ and Utah⁵¹ each host websites explaining to educators what micro-credentials are and reasons to explore them.

4. Curate high-quality micro-credential offerings to align with educators' and students' learning needs. Educators should have some discretion in choosing what professional learning and/or advancement opportunities to pursue based on their own interests and goals. However, states should help guide these choices by providing educators with a set of high-quality options likely to help them, and in turn their students. Rather than putting the onus on educators and their LEAs to locate a relevant micro-credential and submit it to the state for vetting, states should consider proactively curating a discrete set of vetted high-quality micro-credentials for educators to choose from, at least in the initial rollout. In addition to promoting more consistent micro-credential quality, this focused approach will allow schools, LEAs, and regional educational service agencies to better support educators throughout the micro-credentialing process and enable educators to collaborate on micro-credentials to meet common individual and school goals.

State spotlight: Illinois⁵² and Nevada⁵³ provide curated lists of the micro-credentials that educators can engage with to satisfy state license renewal policy requirements.

5. Provide local education leaders the training necessary to support educators in successfully earning high-quality micro-credentials. Most educators do not have experience with the type of applied learning that high-quality micro-credentials call for, including local education leaders. Without professional learning supports, educators who attempt to earn high-quality micro-credentials might not succeed in doing so, leaving the full potential of this tool untapped and making educators hesitant to engage with them in the future. Local leaders will need assistance with thinking through how to make shifts in their schools that can support educators in earning micro-credentials that ultimately benefit students. For example, leaders can help ensure that instructional coaching and curricular materials reinforce the evidence-based practices and applied learning that educators are being asked to demonstrate to earn high-quality micro-credentials.

State spotlight: While this research did not attempt to assess this aspect of policy implementation, states such as Wyoming⁵⁴ have produced materials that reflect the need for incentives and support for educators to choose to engage with micro-credentials.

6. Deploy data to better understand and harness educator micro-credential potential. Data are key, whether they are being used to assess stakeholders' experience with micro-credentials or evaluate the relationship between earned micro-credentials and changes in instructional practice or student achievement. Without data, policymakers will have difficulty assessing whether their micro-credential policies are on track to meet their goals or how to adjust policy design and/or implementation if not on track.

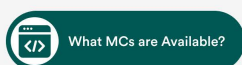
State spotlight: Arkansas and Tennessee are two early adopter states that relied on data from pilots to make revisions to their educator micro-credential policy efforts.⁵⁵

For more insights on designing effective state policy with educator micro-credentials, see New America's *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: Model State Policy Guide*.⁵⁶

Appendix A: Understanding the High-Quality Micro-credentialing Process and Ecosystem

Figure 10 | The Process to Earn a High-Quality Educator Micro-Credential

First, understand the micro-credential (MC) ecosystems:



What MCs are Available?

Developers create MCs and make them available online (often via a separate Digital Platform provider)



What Value Does a MC Provide?

Recognizers (e.g., states and employers) determine the market value that a given MC or stack of MCs hold for Earners

Next, engage in the process:



SELECTION

Candidate selects a MC to earn from the Digital Platform and reviews the evidence required for demonstrating competency and the rubric describing how submitted evidence will be assessed



IMPLEMENTATION

Candidate collects evidence of demonstrating competency in practice. Candidate may review the associated MC resources and/or engage in other types of professional development to aid their ability to demonstrate



SUBMISSION

Candidate curates required evidence (e.g., artifacts of learning, practice, and/or impact) and submits through the Digital Platform



FEEDBACK

If the Assessor does NOT approve the submission, the Candidates receives feedback on how to improve their submission, and is provided the opportunity to re-submit (often as many times as necessary to earn the MC)



ASSESSMENT

Issuer-assigned Assessor(s) reviews evidence using the provided rubric and recommends whether the Candidate meets requirements for earning



EARNING

If the Assessor approves the submission, the Candidate earns the MC, and receives some representation of the credential as proof via the Digital Platform (often in the form of a digital badge) from the Issuer

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Table 2 | Six Primary Roles in High-Quality Educator Micro-Credential (MC) Ecosystem

Entity	Role	Example
Developer	Designs MC offering	The Friday Institute, NEA
Platform	Houses available MC offerings	Digital Promise, Bloomboard
Candidate/ Earner	Registers for MC, submits evidence for assessment	Teachers, Principals
Assessor	Reviews evidence submitted	Usu. Platform or Developer
Issuer	Provides digital credential/proof of successful completion	Usu. Platform or Developer
Recognizer	Determines value MC holds	States, LEAs

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Appendix B: Interviews Conducted by Authors, Chronologically

- Jason Lange, BloomBoard, September 11, 2024
- Jennifer Kabaker, Aurora Institute, September 13, 2024
- Christina Luke, Digital Promise, September 13, 2024
- Ann Coffman and Barbara Hicks, National Education Association, September 20, 2024
- Laureen Avery, The ExcEL Leadership Academy, September 25, 2024
- Marilys Galindo, Digital Promise, October 1, 2024 (Lisette Partelow only)
- Myra Best, digiLEARN, November 4, 2024, and February 24, 2025 (Melissa Tooley only)
- Malia Hite, Utah State Board of Education, January 27, 2025

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all interviews were conducted by both authors via a Zoom video call.

Appendix C: Definitions and Examples for Six Educator Policy Areas

Detailed information about how the authors defined each of the six identified educator policy areas, and determined whether state micro-credential policy existed in those areas, are offered below along with examples of policy scenarios that would or would not meet these criteria. Note that for the purpose of this analysis, the terms *certification* and *license* are used interchangeably, although some states only use one term or the other, or use these two terms to refer to distinct offerings.

- 1. Complying with state pre-service educator preparation program approval guidelines:** State policy explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials in state-approved pre-service educator preparation programs (EPPs) offered by institutions of higher education and/or other accepted providers. An approved EPP choosing to offer micro-credentials on its own would not meet this criterion, nor would individual EPPs choosing to provide undergraduate or graduate level credit for earned micro-credentials.⁵⁷
- 2. Fulfilling requirements for initial or first-time professional educator certification:** State policy explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials as part of the state requirements for obtaining initial or first-time professional certification that authorizes an individual to work as an educator in the state's public schools. For example, a state may require an experienced educator to obtain an initial principal credential through a stack of state-approved micro-credentials that assesses required competencies, or allow individuals authorized to teach on a temporary certificate to earn micro-credentials to demonstrate the competencies necessary to move to a permanent professional license.
- 3. Providing curated professional development for current educators:** State policy explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials that were curated, and often directly offered, by the state to promote professional learning on high-priority topics. Educator engagement with micro-credentials on curated topics may be required or optional, and states sometimes encourage engagement by offering these professional development opportunities free of charge or even offering financial stipends for successful completion. This type of professional development is not the same as the professional development requirements for license renewal (see next policy area) because the learning opportunities have been curated by the state to

focus on a specific topic or narrow range of topics, and do not necessarily count toward relicensure. A state-required micro-credential stack on the science of reading, for example, or developing and promoting a curated list of micro-credentials focused on the top five LEA-identified areas for educator growth would be included in this category. An extensive repository of micro-credentials on varied topics would not meet this criterion. (Note that the focus of and methodology used for this policy area differ from those used in the 2020 policy scan. See Appendix D for details.)

4. **Fulfilling professional learning requirements for educator license renewal:** State policy explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials that count toward the state’s professional learning requirements for license renewal (i.e., retaining the ability to practice in the same role, and with the same license type for a specified number of years determined by each state).⁵⁸ An example would be a state that specifies that all micro-credentials offered by the state provide a specific value in the state’s license renewal currency (which holds various names and is measured in various ways across the states, such as continuing education units, clock hours, professional development credits, or professional learning points). For states where LEAs have broad discretion over what professional development counts toward educator license renewal, ones that *explicitly* allow or encourage LEAs to provide credit for earning micro-credentials would meet this criterion, but states that are silent on this topic would not, even if some LEAs are allowing micro-credentials for this purpose. (Note that the focus of and methodology used for this policy area differ from those used in the 2020 policy scan. See Appendix D for details.)
5. **Fulfilling requirements for additional endorsements for current educators:** State policy explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials for additional endorsements, which are typically ways for an educator to signal on their state license that they have expertise in a specific area. An example of an additional endorsement micro-credential policy would be allowing teachers to earn a computer science or teaching English learners endorsement by successfully completing a stack of micro-credentials on those topics. Some states offer endorsements that lead to the potential for a role change (e.g., teacher to instructional coach); in these cases, the policy would be tallied under the “advanced licensure” policy area.
6. **Fulfilling requirements for an advanced license or endorsement for current educators:** State policy explicitly allows, encourages, or requires the use of micro-credentials to earn the type of new license or endorsement that provides the potential for career advancement, such

as moving to a master teacher, reading specialist, or instructional coach role. Policies for a teacher earning a first-time school administrator license were not included here but in the initial credential tally, as this move represents a new career field rather than advancement within the same career field. Allowing LEAs to provide salary bumps for micro-credential completion would not meet this criterion.

Appendix D: Policy Categorization Methodology Differences from 2020 to 2025

The approach we used to categorize *ongoing professional development* and *license renewal* policies in this report shifted from our approach 2020 in several ways, and for several reasons.

First, in the 2020 tally, we counted policies that incorporated micro-credentials for any general professional learning in the *ongoing professional learning* category, because nearly all were for a non-specified topic. Even though much of the ongoing professional learning that micro-credentials were used for could also likely be used to satisfy license renewal requirements, states' intentionality about their use for license renewal was murky, so we only counted policies in the *license renewal* category if the state specified the "exchange rate" for earned micro-credentials in its license renewal currency (e.g., one micro-credential = 10 professional learning points).

However, in the 2025 tally, we only counted policies that incorporated micro-credentials for professional learning on curated topics (e.g., the science of reading) in the *ongoing professional learning* category, because (a) many states are now leveraging micro-credentials for very specific professional learning goals in a way they were not in 2020; and (b) most states are now explicit about the ability to use micro-credentials to meet professional learning requirements for license renewal, even if they do not specify the license renewal currency equivalence, so these instances are counted in the *license renewal* category. The license renewal category now also includes states that explicitly allow LEAs to count micro-credentials for this purpose (since, in some states, LEAs determine what types of professional development their educators submit for license renewal). Appendix B provides a full definition of the curated professional development and license renewal policy categories, as well as examples of the types of policies that would be categorized in each in the 2025 tally.

Combining these two categories of state policies related to ongoing educator professional learning (whether general or specific, for license renewal credit or not) provides a more comparable state tally from 2020 to 2025. The "overall professional learning" subtotal is not equal to the sum of the "license renewal requirements" and "ongoing" categories because several states have policies in both categories—one in 2020 (Tennessee), and five in 2025 (Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, and Rhode Island).

For a more apples-to-apples comparison to the 2020 license renewal tally, the eight states that define a specific exchange rate for converting earned micro-credentials to the currency used in their license renewal policies (e.g., one micro-credential = five continuing education units) or otherwise explain how earning micro-credentials counts toward meeting relicensure requirements

(e.g., one hour of professional learning = one professional learning credit) in the 2025 analysis are indicated with an asterisk (*) in the table in Appendix E.

Appendix E: Summary of State Educator Micro-Credential Policies, by Category

Appendix E | Summary of State Educator Micro-Credential (MC) Policies, by Type

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State	Overall		Specific Policy Type					
	Any Current Policy	Total Number of Policy Types	Educator Preparation	Initial or First-Time Professional Certification	Curated Professional Development	Licensure Renewal	Additional Endorsements	Licensure Advancement
Alabama	Yes	1	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Alaska	Yes	3	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Arizona	Yes	1	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Arkansas	Yes	4	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
California	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Colorado	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Connecticut	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Delaware	Yes	3	No	Yes	Yes	Yes *	No	No
District of Columbia	Yes	2	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Florida	Yes	3	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Georgia	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Hawaii	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Idaho	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Illinois	Yes	1	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Indiana	Yes	1	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Iowa	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Kansas	Yes	1	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Kentucky	Yes	1	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Louisiana	Yes	2	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Maine	Yes	1	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

* State that defines a specific exchange rate for converting earned micro-credentials to the currency used in its license renewal policy (e.g., one micro-credential = five continuing education units) or otherwise explains how earning micro-credentials counts toward meeting requirements for license renewal (e.g., one hour of professional learning = one professional learning credit).

For additional details and source information see [Appendix F](#).

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State	Overall		Specific Policy Type					
	Any Current Policy	Total Number of Policy Types	Educator Preparation	Initial or First-Time Professional Certification	Curated Professional Development	Licensure Renewal	Additional Endorsements	Licensure Advancement
Maryland	Yes	2	No	No	Yes	Yes *	No	No
Massachusetts	Yes	1	No	No	No	Yes *	No	No
Michigan	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Minnesota	Yes	1	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Mississippi	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Missouri	Yes	3	No	Yes	No	Yes *	No	Yes
Montana	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Nebraska	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Nevada	Yes	1	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
New Hampshire	Yes	1	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
New Jersey	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
New Mexico	Yes	2	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
New York	Yes	1	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
North Carolina	Yes	1	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
North Dakota	Yes	1	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Ohio	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Oklahoma	Yes	2	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Oregon	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Pennsylvania	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Rhode Island	Yes	3	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

* State that defines a specific exchange rate for converting earned micro-credentials to the currency used in its license renewal policy (e.g., one micro-credential = five continuing education units) or otherwise explains how earning micro-credentials counts toward meeting requirements for license renewal (e.g., one hour of professional learning = one professional learning credit).

For additional details and source information see [Appendix F](#).

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State	Overall		Specific Policy Type					
	Any Current Policy	Total Number of Policy Types	Educator Preparation	Initial or First-Time Professional Certification	Curated Professional Development	Licensure Renewal	Additional Endorsements	Licensure Advancement
South Carolina	Yes	2	No	Yes	No	Yes *	No	No
South Dakota	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tennessee	Yes	1	No	No	No	Yes *	No	No
Texas	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Utah	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Vermont	Yes	2	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Virginia	Yes	1	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Washington	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
West Virginia	No	0	No	No	No	No	No	No
Wisconsin	Yes	1	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Wyoming	Yes	2	No	No	No	Yes *	Yes	No
Total	7	13	1	2	2	3	4	1

* State that defines a specific exchange rate for converting earned micro-credentials to the currency used in its license renewal policy (e.g., one micro-credential = five continuing education units) or otherwise explains how earning micro-credentials counts toward meeting requirements for license renewal (e.g., one hour of professional learning = one professional learning credit).

For additional details and source information see [Appendix F](#).

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Appendix F: Additional Insights on Individual State Educator Micro-Credential Policies

Appendix F | State Educator Micro-Credential Policy Sources and Further Details

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State	Sources and Further Details by Policy Type
Alabama	Credential attainment: The State Board of Education mandates that individuals who obtain a one-year Non-Professional Temporary Certificate must progress to the Professional Educator Certificate within three years. To meet the Professional Educator Certificate requirements, the state offers educators the option to successfully complete high-quality micro credentials in the area of the certificate as an alternative to passing the state subject assessment. Miscellaneous: A 2024 Alabama law requires the State Superintendent of Education to establish a system for approving professional learning for teacher license renewal “including, but not limited to, a menu of micro credentials that relates directly to any teaching certificate holders’ responsibilities as an educator.”
Alaska	Credential attainment: Alaska’s administrative code specifies that one of the options Alaska educators have for fulfilling requirements for the mandatory progression from an initial license to a professional license is earning Department of Education-approved micro-credentials. Licensure renewal: Alaska’s administrative code specifies that Department of Education-approved micro-credentials are eligible professional development for license renewal. The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development specifies that micro-credentials earned from three specified providers can count toward the six non-academic credits required for license renewal. The Department does not define a rate specifically for converting earned micro-credentials to nonacademic credits but does specify generally that one non-academic credit may be awarded per 15 contact hours. Additional endorsements: State administrative code permits Department-approved micro-credentials to be used toward earning new endorsements.
Arizona	Additional endorsements: Staff at the Arizona Department of Education provided the following information on December 10, 2024: The Arizona Board of Education rules for the Gifted (PreK–12) and Computer Science (PreK–8 and 6–12) endorsements allow applicants to use either a specified number of clock hours of in-service training or “the equivalent through competency-based credentials.”
Arkansas	Credential attainment: Arkansas educators teaching under the Alternate Assessment Plan (AAP) provisional license or Provisional Professional Teaching License (PPTL) have three years to make the required progression to the standard professional license in order to continue teaching. For AAP educators, progression requires either retaking and passing the content area assessment or passing a performance-based assessment in the content area, for which earning micro-credentials is one option. PPTL teachers may choose to complete micro-credentials as a demonstration of pedagogical competence instead of passing the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching test. Curated professional development: The Arkansas Department of Education’s offices of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure partnered to provides 14 micro-credentials on the topics of Universal Design for Learning/inclusive classrooms, learning environments, scaffolding instruction, explicit vocabulary instruction, professional growth, and engaging families at no cost to Arkansas teachers and administrators through ArkansasIDEAS. Licensure renewal: State regulations explicitly state that micro-credentials approved by the Division of Elementary & Secondary Education are an acceptable method of professional development for earning professional learning credits for license renewal. Licensure advancement: Arkansas offers educators seeking to earn the Master Professional Educator or Lead Professional Educator designation the option to do so via several approved micro-credential pathways. On its webpage devoted to educator micro-credentials, the Division of Elementary & Secondary Education also clarifies that LEAs may elect to use stacks of micro-credentials to create opportunities for advancement on the LEA’s salary schedule. Miscellaneous: The Division of Elementary & Secondary Education offers a webpage where it compiles all of its initiatives and policies related to educator micro-credentials. Arkansas participated in digiLEARN’s Micro-credential Partnership of the States to create shared Quality Assurance Standards, and is using the associated rubric to vet the micro-credentials the state offers (per email correspondence with digiLEARN’s executive director on April 8, 2025).
California	N/A
Colorado	N/A

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State	Sources and Further Details by Policy Type
Connecticut	N/A
Delaware	Credential attainment: For candidates with satisfactory GPAs who miss the required content knowledge licensure exam score by a small margin but meet all other initial teacher credentialing requirements, the Delaware Professional Standards Board's regulations provide three options for demonstrating the required content knowledge beyond retaking the exam; as the Delaware Department of Education's website highlights, one of these options entails the completion of three micro-credentials. Additionally, in order to make the mandatory progression from an initial standard license to a professional license, Delaware requires novice teachers to complete a four-year induction program which requires 15 professional learning hours; two of the five options for fulfilling these hours include completing micro-credentials. Curated professional development: The Delaware Department of Education offers stacks of micro-credentials for training in early literacy and in world languages Licensure renewal: Delaware's administrative code specifies that micro-credentials earned through a Delaware Department of Education-approved issuer count as professional development required to renew a license, and outlines how credit hours are calculated (based on verified clock hours). Educators can earn 10 relicensure hours and badges for the successful completion of each Delaware Department of Education micro-credential. Miscellaneous: Delaware's administrative code clearly defines what micro-credentials for educators are, and the Department of Education offers a micro-credentials overview webpage that informs educators about micro-credentials in plain language and highlights which micro-credentials Delaware offers and the rationale for earning them.
District of Columbia	Curated professional development: Via its Foundations of Special Education School Cohort, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) awards two micro-credentials for completing Foundations of Special Education coursework (four asynchronous courses consisting of 16 self-paced modules) with an overall passing grade of at least 70% in OSSE's LMS platform and demonstrating content mastery through on-the-job summative assessment activities. Additional endorsements: Via its Special Education Endorsement Recovery Initiative, OSSE offers an endorsement in special education to anyone who successfully earns the Foundations of Special Education School Cohort micro-credentials and passes the content area license exam in special education. Miscellaneous: In email correspondence on 1/8/25, OSSE staff indicated that, though there is not a policy explicitly naming micro-credentials as an option for licensure renewal, educators are allowed significant flexibility in determining how to accrue professional learning units (PLUs) needed for renewal and can and do use micro-credentials to meet their PLU requirements.
Florida	Curated professional development: The Florida Department of Education and the Division of Early Learning partnered with the University of Florida's Lastinger Center to offer free literacy micro-credentials. A Department web page specifies that, per the state's administrative code, instructional personnel who have successfully earned the Elementary or Secondary Literacy micro-credential can provide intensive reading intervention under supervision of someone endorsed/certified in reading. Successful micro-credential completers can earn a \$1,000 stipend. Licensure renewal: Florida's Department of Education promotes and financially supports an emergent literacy micro-credential that satisfies the state requirement that pre-K teachers complete an emergent literacy course in order to retain their license. It also promotes literacy micro-credentials that satisfy the state's requirement that educators in subject areas responsible for reading instruction must earn 40 points as part of their 120 professional development points required for license renewal. Additional endorsements: The Department's website indicates that one pathway to earn a reading endorsement is completing the Lastinger Center's Literacy Matrix, within which micro-credentials are used to satisfy one of the five required competencies, and which offers a \$2,000 stipend for completion.
Georgia	N/A
Hawaii	N/A
Idaho	Miscellaneous: In email communication on December 16, 2024, Idaho's Division of Career and Technical Education (CTE) indicated plans to establish micro-credentials for the requirements that prospective educators must meet to move from a Limited Occupational Specialist Certificate (a three-year nonrenewable certificate) to a Standard or Advanced Occupational Specialist Certificate (five-year renewable certificate). These changes are expected to be implemented in 2025. The Division of CTE also offers an online platform (SkillStack) for CTE educators to validate student competencies earned via micro-credentials. It is also working to allow CTE educators to electronically record their professional learning credits for license renewal via the SkillStack platform.
Illinois	Licensure renewal: On its website, the Illinois State Board of Education communicates that acceptable professional development for meeting the required 120 hours of PD for license renewal includes activities provided by an approved Illinois professional development provider, but that it does not allow all micro-credentials offered by approved providers to count toward license renewal. Instead, the State Board publishes a list of all state-approved micro-credentials and the issuing organization for each. The website also specifies that, for any type of PD activity, credit is awarded on a 1:1 basis, where one clock hour of attendance is the equivalent of one PD hour. Miscellaneous: On its website, the Illinois State Board of Education communicates the formal process and official rubric it uses for vetting whether micro-credentials offered by state-approved professional development providers that can be recognized on an educator's professional educator license.
Indiana	Curated professional development: Indiana's State Department of Education has partnered with BloomBoard to fund 30 educators in completing coursework to earn computer science micro-credentials that can help them expand learning experiences for PreK-12 students. Miscellaneous: Educators participating in BloomBoard's computer science coursework and micro-credentials can accumulate up to 30 credit hours toward a master's degree in technology and computer science education from Oklahoma Christian University, which would count toward the six credit hours required to renew a 5- or 10-year standard certificate, but there is no explicit state license renewal policy, or any mention of micro-credentials within the state's professional growth plan guidelines for license renewal.

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State	Sources and Further Details by Policy Type
Iowa	Miscellaneous: Several professional development providers approved by the state to offer license renewal credit offer micro-credentials (e.g., MISIC). However, the state does not explicitly mention the ability for educators to engage in approved micro-credentials as part of meeting relicensure requirements, despite the fact that high-quality micro-credentials meet many of the goals specified for educators using Individualized Professional Development Plans to meet renewal requirements.
Kansas	Licensure renewal: Under the recommendation of its Professional Standards Board, Kansas developed a web page that hosts resources on micro-credentials. The page states that micro-credentials can be used toward professional development points for license renewal, with the approval of the local Professional Development Council.
Kentucky	Licensure advancement: Through the Continuing Education Option (CEO), Plan II, districts, groups of districts (such as educational cooperatives), and state institutions of higher education with accredited educator preparation providers can submit proposed programs for educator “rank change” (i.e., license advancement) to Kentucky’s Educator Professional Standards Board for approval. The guidance explicitly allows micro-credentials to be integrated into these programs. For example, Kentucky Education Association is partnering with Western KY University’s EPP to use micro-credentials to offer educators a CEO, Plan II option.
Louisiana	Licensure advancement: In email correspondence on December 19, 2024, the Louisiana Department of Education indicated that it uses micro-credentials for mentor teacher and content leader endorsements for current teachers. The online certification application for these endorsements also specifies that one pathway to demonstrating requirements is by passing the “assessment series documented with completion certificate from BloomBoard” (a micro-credential provider). Miscellaneous: The Louisiana Department of Education accepts micro-credentials for its Pre-Educator Pathway. Louisiana requires all approved educator preparation programs to include a competency-based design but makes no explicit reference to micro-credentials as a competency-based approach available to programs for this purpose.
Maine	Curated professional development: Maine’s Department of Education offers the opportunity to earn two free micro-credentials on supporting multilingual learners through the ExCEL Leadership Academy, the opportunity to earn graduate credits, and a \$250 stipend for each micro-credential completed.
Maryland	Curated professional development: The Maryland Department of Education offers a science of reading micro-credential at no cost to educators. Licensure renewal: The Maryland Department of Education explicitly states that educators may earn professional development points (PDPs) toward license renewal requirements by earning micro-credentials, and that one earned micro-credential is the equivalent of 10 PDPs (90 are required for relicensure). Miscellaneous: The Maryland Department of Education is developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Chairperson micro-credential to ensure that educators can design and support the implementation of effective, high-quality IEPs for students with disabilities.
Massachusetts	Licensure renewal: Massachusetts’s License Renewal Guidelines document includes a section on using micro-credentials, stating their equivalency in professional development points (PDPs), which is the currency of the state’s license renewal system (see the “Recertification Guidelines” link in the “Professional Development Point (PDP) Eligibility” section). The guidance says that two micro-credential badges are typically equal to 10 PDPs, as long as the badges are in a related topic area. Individual badges may be equal to two or five PDPs depending on the time involved, although one micro-credential badge bundled with other related PD activities may earn a minimum of 10 PDPs.
Michigan	Miscellaneous: While Michigan’s license renewal policy does not explicitly mention micro-credentials, the state appears to allow at least some micro-credentials to count toward accrual of the State Continuing Education Clock Hours required for relicensure. For example, the state included some micro-credentials offered by the Michigan Educator Association/National Education Association on a list of free and low-cost professional learning options it developed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Minnesota	Credential attainment: Stacks of micro-credentials are embedded in this certification pathway for career and technical education (CTE) educators, supported by funding from Minnesota’s Office of Higher Education.
Mississippi	Miscellaneous: In correspondence on December 9, 2024, staff at the Mississippi Department of Education Office of Teaching and Leading indicated that the state is in the process of requiring a shift to job-relevant, embedded, and targeted professional learning strategies for licensure renewal starting with local school, central office, and superintendent levels of leadership. This shift will roll out, tentatively, in mid to late 2025. Subsequent to that rollout, the state will require the same shift for teachers and supplemental service providers. While the professional learning offerings will reflect many of the aspects of high-quality micro-credentials, the state is not referring to its offerings as micro-credentials.
Missouri	Credential attainment: Missouri’s state regulations (p. 51) indicate that the only way an individual with a principal or school leader certificate can obtain the Special Education Director, Kindergarten–Grade 12 Initial Administrator Certificate is by completing the Missouri Department of Education’s approved Special Education Director micro-credentials. Licensure renewal: Missouri’s state regulations (p. 13) explicitly state that earning one micro-credential is equivalent to obtaining 15 of the required contact hours for license renewal. Licensure advancement: Missouri’s state regulations (p. 51) indicate that administrators can advance their administrator certificate by completing Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) micro-credentials instead of completing an education specialist degree or higher. They need three micro-credentials to upgrade from an initial administrator certificate and 15 to upgrade from an initial or transition administrator certificate to a career continuous administrator certificate.
Montana	Miscellaneous: Montana’s Office of Public Instruction defines micro-credentials on its website and indicates that it does not presently have a policy of accepting micro-credentials as professional development units for relicensure. However, the website explains that individual PD opportunities within micro-credential frameworks may be eligible for PD units if the provider is an approved PD unit provider and the event aligns with the Administrative Rules of Montana.
Nebraska	Miscellaneous: A state legislator proposed an exploratory study of educator micro-credentials in 2018.

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State	Sources and Further Details by Policy Type
Nevada	Curated professional development: Nevada's Department of Education offers an online library of approximately 50 micro-credentials aligned with the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) standards.
New Hampshire	Curated professional development: The New Hampshire Education Department offers educators the opportunity to earn free or low-cost micro-credentials focused on the science of reading through a partnership with Credentials Unlimited. Miscellaneous: ExcEL Leadership Academy, which uses micro-credentials as part of its program, is listed on the New Hampshire Department of Education's website as a professional development provider for teachers of English learners.
New Jersey	N/A
New Mexico	Credential attainment: The New Mexico Public Education Department requires educators with a Level 1 (initial) certificate to progress to a Level 2 certificate within five years of teaching on a Level 1 certificate. To do so, educators who have a master's degree can choose to complete five Advancement Program Level (APL) micro-credentials provided by the state, in addition to meeting minimum teaching experience and job performance requirements, in lieu of obtaining National Board Certification. Licensure advancement: Educators may also opt to move from a Level 2 to Level 3 certificate by earning APL micro-credentials in addition to earning a master's degree and meeting minimum teaching experience and job performance requirements, in lieu of obtaining National Board Certification.
New York	Licensure renewal: The New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives website explicitly indicates that educators who complete micro-credentials offered by an entity approved to offer Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) hours may earn clock hours toward license renewal. Miscellaneous: The State University of New York system offers a platform that includes micro-credentials for educators which are also being used outside of the state (e.g., by Maryland's State Department of Education).
North Carolina	Licensure renewal: A North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's web page dedicated to educator micro-credentials references state regulation language as evidence for why LEAs can allow micro-credentials to count toward relicensure requirements: "We already have policies in place that support the use (of) competency based professional development: LEAs may develop an alternative license renewal plan that is competency-based and results-oriented. The plan must describe the connection among professional development, the school improvement plan, and the individual's license area or job responsibilities through processes such as peer review and annual evaluation. The plan may waive specific hour requirements that a licensed employee must meet and focus instead on knowledge and skill acquired by participants. The plan must align with the expectations of the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and include outcome measures and must be submitted to the Department for review in advance of its implementation." Miscellaneous: From 2020–23, digiLEARN led the North Carolina Partnership for Micro-credentials initiative that included educators, local and state education agency leaders, state policymakers, researchers, business leaders, and funders in creating recommendations for if and how North Carolina should incorporate micro-credentials for educator professional learning and advancement (note that New America conducted research and provided technical assistance for this effort). North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) also participated in digiLEARN's Micro-credential Partnership of the States to create shared quality assurance standards (QAS) and an associated rubric. In fall 2024, the State Board of Education officially authorized the use of the QAS rubric for LEAs to vet which micro-credentials educators can count toward relicensure requirements, and DPI is now working to use it to develop educator micro-credentials for AI, digital data privacy, and integration of digital learning standards into curriculum (per email correspondence with digiLEARN's executive director on April 8, 2025).
North Dakota	Additional endorsements: The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction offers educators the option of obtaining three different levels of computer science or cybersecurity endorsement by earning one or more stacks of micro-credentials. Educators must renew this endorsement every five years, and two of the three options for doing so involve earning micro-credentials. Miscellaneous: The state is developing a lead-teacher Registered Apprenticeship program which will use micro-credentials, and it expects to have resources publicly available in summer 2025; see the "ASU Modules" folder.
Ohio	N/A
Oklahoma	Curated professional development: K–3 teachers who enroll in and complete the Oklahoma State Department of Education's Science of Reading Academies two-year literacy training earn a micro-credential and a \$600 stipend. State law requires any teacher not certified in physical education/health who is integrating health education into other content areas to earn a health education micro-credential, which is offered on the Department of Education's professional development website. Additional endorsements: The Oklahoma State Department of Education will issue a two-year provisional certificate in the endorsement area of severe/profound disabilities to any individual who has obtained a standard certificate in mild/moderate disabilities, is recommended for the certificate by a school district board of education, and commits to completing a state-approved micro-credential endorsement program on severe/profound disabilities within two years. The creation of this program was required by state law (p. 6). In 2024, the state also enacted a law to create STEM endorsements, including computer science, through micro-credentials. Miscellaneous: The Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education hosts the UpskillOK website, which is a repository for micro-credentials for workforce development offered by institutions of higher education. The site includes 19 micro-credentials for educators.
Oregon	N/A
Pennsylvania	Miscellaneous: Although Pennsylvania has no explicit state policy about counting earned micro-credentials toward educator license renewal requirements, materials from the Pennsylvania State Education Association (a state-approved provider of continuing professional education hours for relicensure) indicates the state has been awarding 15 hours for completing the micro-credential assignments and 20 hours for successfully earning the micro-credential. The Department neither publishes a list of approved providers nor indicates which providers offer a micro-credentialing option, although it does provide a tool for educators to search whether a specific provider is state-approved.

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State	Sources and Further Details by Policy Type
Rhode Island	Credential attainment: To make the mandated progression from the three-year initial license to the five-year professional license, educators must earn professional learning units (PLUs). Rhode Island Board of Education regulations (p. 46) state that micro-credential “activities that require the educator to demonstrate proficiency in a new skill by submitting evidence of mastery” are an allowable way to earn PLUs. Curated professional development: Rhode Island Department of Education’s Financial Literacy Implementation Guide highlights micro-credentials as one way for educators to meet the legislative requirements for professional learning that supports the implementation of new student financial literacy standards. The law specifically required the Department to provide a list of micro-credentialing programs that train educators in the skills necessary to deliver financial literacy lessons. Licensure renewal requirements: Rhode Island Board of Education regulations state that micro-credential “activities that require the educator to demonstrate proficiency in a new skill by submitting evidence of mastery” are allowable activities for earning the required PLUs for licensure renewal. The Department’s Professional Learning Standards implementation guide also mentions micro-credentialing. Miscellaneous: Rhode Island’s Department of Education does not require endorsements, but some LEAs do. The Department offers a pathway to a multilingual learner endorsement via the ExCEL Leadership Academy’s competency-based micro-credentials (provided through BloomBoard). However, the Department does not explicitly indicate in any materials that ExCEL’s pathway (or any other) includes micro-credentials. The Department of Education also offers an initial certification pathway for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), with 12 micro-credentials via the ExCEL Leadership Academy. However, the Department’s website does not explicitly indicate that this pathway (or any other) includes micro-credentials.
South Carolina	Credential attainment: South Carolina requires individuals who receive initial certification to teach through the Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation pathway to progress to the professional certificate within three years. To do so, they are required to complete micro-credentials. Licensure renewal: LEAs get to determine which professional learning activities count toward license renewal for their educators and the value of those activities in the currency of license renewal credits. But the South Carolina Department of Education’s Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development offers a web page on micro-credentials where it “encourages educators to explore micro-credentials as a way to formally recognize...growth.” The page gives formal guidance to LEA and school administrators clarifying that job-embedded professional learning, including high-quality micro-credentials, counts toward license renewal. It also recommends the number of license renewal credits for earning one micro-credential (12 credits). The state has also partnered with CarolinaCrED at the University of South Carolina to offer educator micro-credentials for professional learning. Miscellaneous: South Carolina participated in digiLEARN’s Micro-credential Partnership of the States to create shared quality assurance standards (QAS); CarolinaCrED is using the QAS and associated rubric to revise and develop its state-approved micro-credentials (per email correspondence with digiLEARN’s executive director, on April 8, 2025).
South Dakota	N/A
Tennessee	Licensure renewal: Tennessee State Board of Education regulations (p. 6) state explicitly that teachers can get six professional development points towards license renewal for each approved micro-credential completed.
Texas	Miscellaneous: The Texas state legislature passed a law requiring the State Board for Educator Certification to establish opportunities for educators to earn micro-credentials, but it never funded the initiative. The legislature also worked on a bill for an educator micro-credential focused on delivering virtual instruction. Per email correspondence with staff at the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on April 11, 2025, the agency is in the early stages of developing a micro-credential in digital teaching that uses a competency-based model, where participants will demonstrate relevant skills through the submission of artifacts. The agency expects to offer separate pathways for novice teachers, advanced teachers, and administrators, with each pathway embedding components of virtual and hybrid education. A pilot phase is scheduled for the 2025-2026 academic year, with the official program launch planned for 2026-2027.
Utah	Educator preparation: Utah’s State Board of Education (USBE) requires all educator preparation programs (EPPs)—whether housed at an institution of higher education or another entity—to submit evidence of how their program will align with the state’s teacher preparation competencies for state approval via a template. This template lists micro-credentials as a potential vehicle for prospective educators to demonstrate the required competencies. The USBE provides separate forms for elementary and secondary programs. Utah’s university-based EPPs must also submit a form to USBE for each of the endorsement areas they offer specifying the competencies required to earn the endorsement and how candidates will be expected to demonstrate each one. The form lists micro-credentials as an example of how candidates could demonstrate the required competencies. Credential attainment: Utah offers temporary certification to teach through its Alternate Pathway to Professional Educator License (APPEL), but requires teachers progress to the professional license by completing a Board-approved APPEL EPP. To become a Board-approved APPEL EPP, a program must describe how it will ensure that its candidates “have sufficiently demonstrated the ability to work in the applicable license area and subject area” before recommending them for a professional license, including by filling out USBE’s form, which lists micro-credentials as one way for EPPs to have candidates demonstrate competencies. Additional endorsements: In 2023, Utah began requiring a competency-based approach to earning all endorsements, and many of these incorporate micro-credentials. The Utah State Board of Education offers a digital platform with the option to earn many endorsements (elementary math, elementary science, elementary STEM, ed tech, family and consumer science, health, literacy specialist, PCBL, physical education, secondary ELA, secondary mathematics, and secondary science) entirely via stacks (“pathways” in USBE’s verbiage) of micro-credentials. Licensure advancement: Two of Utah’s competency-based endorsements allow teachers to become instructional coaches or mentor teachers, both of which can be obtained at least in part by completing micro-credentials. Miscellaneous: The Utah State Board of Education and the Utah Education Network developed a website to help make educators aware of micro-credentials and explain what they are, how they work, and why educators may choose to engage in earning one. The Utah State Board of Education also developed an online library of over 400 micro-credentials where educators can engage in training on specific subjects; earning one micro-credential awards 0.5 USBE credits. USBE staff confirmed via email on April 8, 2025 that these USBE credits do not count toward the state’s educator license renewal policy requirements, but that educators may accumulate these credits toward salary lane changes.

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State	Sources and Further Details by Policy Type
Vermont	Curated professional development: The Vermont Agency of Education offers free educator training on working with multilingual learners that includes earning micro-credentials through the ExcEL Leadership Academy, although this information is not shared in a prominent location. Additional endorsements: The Vermont Agency of Education highlights the fact that the ExcEL Leadership Academy can help teachers who completed their multilingual learner-focused micro-credentials in earning a multilingual learner endorsement, although this information is not shared in a prominent location. Miscellaneous: Per email communication with staff at the Vermont Agency of Education on December 16, 2024, the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators has created a process that will allow for micro-credentials to be used as part of its multiple measures policy for individuals who do not pass the content area licensure exam (Praxis II), although it does not yet have any approved micro-credentials for this purpose.
Virginia	Additional endorsements: The Virginia Department of Education offers a micro-credential for a provisional reading specialist endorsement. Miscellaneous: The commonwealth passed a law to create micro-credentials for STEM endorsements, but does not appear that they were created or implemented.
Washington	Miscellaneous: Washington's Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) piloted micro-credentials for professional learning in the 2018–19 school year, but has been prohibited by state law from expanding micro-credentials beyond the pilot program since May 2019.
West Virginia	Miscellaneous: As required by state law, the West Virginia Department of Education lists cohorts of educators working to earn micro-credentials as an example of teacher leadership in a document designed to support county boards of education implementing the WV Teacher Leadership Framework.
Wisconsin	Curated professional development: Wisconsin's Department of Education offers six micro-credentials on the use of assistive technology with students with disabilities as part of its Assistive Technology Forward project.
Wyoming	Licensure renewal requirements: Wyoming's Professional Teaching Standards Board's (PTSB) guidance indicates that earned micro-credentials meet the professional development requirements for educator license renewal, with each micro-credential providing educators 0.5 credit hours toward renewal requirements. The state offers an extensive database of educator micro-credentials that can be used to meet these requirements. Additional endorsements: The PTSB's Program Approval Standards for Endorsement Areas regulations authorize the use of micro-credentials within pathways to endorsements, but micro-credential programs must be pre-approved by the PTSB, so it can ensure the pathway will lead to earning an endorsement in the specified area. Wyoming currently offers only one micro-credential-based endorsement pathway, in computer science. Miscellaneous: The state provides very detailed regulations defining educator micro-credentials and their allowable uses, guidance that explains the different terminology associated with high-quality micro-credentials, and also a published Digital Learning Plan that offers details on how it will promote micro-credentials at the local level. Wyoming participated in digiLEARN's Micro-credential Partnership of the States to create shared quality assurance standards (QAS) for educator micro-credentials, and is using the associated rubric to vet micro-credentials the state offers (per email correspondence with the executive director of Wyoming's PTSB on April 10, 2025).

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Notes

- 1 Melissa Tooley and Joseph Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices* (New America, January 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-teacher-growth/>.
- 2 Implicit state policies and related state efforts are noted under the “Miscellaneous” heading in Appendix F, but are not included in overall tallies.
- 3 Melissa Tooley and Joseph Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A Model State Policy Guide* (New America, January 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>.
- 4 According to an analysis from the Learning Policy Institute, approximately 360,000 employed teachers across the nation are not fully certified for their teaching assignments. Further, when including vacancies, the authors estimated that over 400,000 teaching positions were either unfilled or filled by teachers not fully certified for their assignments, a total that represents approximately 1 in 8 teaching positions nationally. For more details see: Tiffany S. Tan, Ivett Arellano, and Susan Kemper Patrick, *State Teacher Shortages 2024 Update: Teaching Positions Left Vacant or Filled by Teachers Without Full Certification* (Learning Policy Institute, August 2024), <https://tinyurl.com/4742f77y>. Interest in becoming, and remaining, an educator has been declining for multiple reasons, including lack of on-the-job support, dissatisfaction with pay, and a dearth of career advancement opportunities. More than 200,000 teachers exit the profession each year, with one in four saying they did so to pursue other career opportunities. For more details see: Anne Podolsky, Tara Kini, Joseph Bishop, and Linda Darling-Hammond, *Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators* (Learning Policy Institute, September 2016), <https://tinyurl.com/mvavvjtd>.
- 5 See results from Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, and Jonah E. Rockoff, “Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood,” *American Economic Review* 104, no. 9, (May 2014): 2633–2679, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.104.9.2633>.
- 6 Student achievement on the annual National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has declined post-COVID-19. For more details, see National Assessment Governing Board, “10 Takeaways from the Newly Released 2024 NAEP Results,” <https://www.nagb.gov/powered-by-naep/the-2024-nations-report-card/10-takeaways-from-2024-naep-results.html>.
- 7 Lisa Bardach and Robert M. Klassen, “Smart Teachers, Successful Students? A Systematic Review of the Literature on Teachers’ Cognitive Abilities and Teacher Effectiveness,” *Educational Research Review* 30 (June 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100312>.
- 8 With the exception of in-area graduate degrees (for example, a master’s degree in mathematics) for middle and high school math teachers, master’s degrees have little to no effect on teacher effectiveness. In fact, some research finds that “out-of-area” graduate degrees (school administration, counseling, curriculum specialist, etc.) are actually correlated with lower teacher effectiveness. See Kevin C. Bastian, “A Degree Above? The Value-Added Estimates and Evaluation Ratings of Teachers with a Graduate Degree,” *Education Finance and Policy* 14 (2019): 652–678, https://doi.org/10.1162/edfp_a_00261; and Matthew M. Chingos and Paul E. Peterson, “It’s Easier to Pick a Good Teacher than to Train One: Familiar and New Results on the Correlates of Teacher Effectiveness,” *Economics of Education Review* 30, no. 3 (2011): 449–465.
- 9 For more details, see the Findings section in Melissa Tooley and Joseph Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices* (New America, January 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-teacher-growth/findings/>.

10 See question “JOBSATIS2 h” on p. 4 in Pew Research Center’s *2023 Survey of Teachers*, April 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2024/04/ST_24.04.04_teacher-survey_topline.pdf.

11 Melissa Tooley and Kaylan Connally, *No Panacea: Diagnosing What Ails Teacher Professional Development Before Reaching for Remedies* (New America, June 2016), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/no-panacea>.

12 An example of a more detailed cycle of inquiry process can be found in the Regional Educational Laboratory West’s infographic, *Using Inquiry Cycles in PLCs to Improve Instruction*, February 2019, <https://ies.ed.gov/rel-west/2025/01/infographic-0>.

13 Digital Promise, “Micro-Credentials for Me: Personal Stories from Real Teachers,” <https://digitalpromise.org/micro-credentials-personal-stories-real-teachers/>.

14 Melissa Tooley, “What Does High-Quality Research Say about Developing Teacher Practice?” *EdCentral* (blog), New America, March 16, 2017, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/what-does-high-quality-research-say-about-developing-teacher-practice/>.

15 Digital Promise, “Micro-Credentials for Me,” <https://digitalpromise.org/micro-credentials-personal-stories-real-teachers/>; Stephen Sawchuk, “Can ‘Micro-Credentialing’ Salvage Teacher PD?” *Ed Week*, March 29, 2016, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/can-micro-credentialing-salvage-teacher-pd/2016/03>; and *Micro-credentials: Spurring Educator Engagement* (Digital Promise, 2016), <https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/dp-microcredentials-spurring-engagement.pdf>.

16 For more details, see Q4 of Melissa Tooley, “Everything You Wanted to Know About Educator Micro-Credentials: Fundamentals,” *EdCentral* (blog), New America, January 20, 2022, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-educator-micro-credentials-fundamentals/>.

17 A common misconception about educator micro-credentials is that they are a type of direct teacher training rather than a credential. However, micro-credential offerings may be paired with resources for developing the specific competency they intend to measure, and high-quality micro-credential offerings always include relevant and evidence-based resources.

18 Earners of micro-credentials are awarded a digital badge as proof of their accomplishment, but not all digital badges are obtained by earning micro-credentials. Digital badges can be awarded for something as simple as attending a conference training or completing a multiple-choice assessment, while earning high-quality micro-credentials requires successful application of the given competency. A 2015 survey of teachers by Digital Promise found that, of 19 distinct micro-credential benefits highlighted, teachers were least interested in displaying digital badges or sharing them on social media. See “Findings,” Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>. For more details on digital badges, see Brittany Gooding, “Microcredentials vs. Open Badges: Navigating the Landscape of Digital Learning Recognition,” *The Instructure Study Hall* (blog), Instructure.com, August 16, 2023, <https://tinyurl.com/5y9d9dzy>.

19 Melissa Tooley and Joseph Hood, “The Process to Earn a Micro-Credential” (figure), *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth* (New America, 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-teacher-growth/understanding-educator-micro-credentials/>.

20 Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-teacher-growth/>.

21 Melissa Tooley and Joseph Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A Model State Policy Guide*, (New America, January 2021), <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>.

22 For the purposes of this analysis, DC is counted as a state.

23 Implicit state policies and related state efforts are noted under the “Miscellaneous” heading in Appendix F, but are not included in overall tallies.

24 While some states, such as Delaware, define the term *micro-credential* in administrative code and offer clear criteria for micro-credentials on the state’s department of education website, many states do not. See Delaware Regulations, Administrative Code Title 14:1500, “1511 Continuing License,” <https://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/1500/1511.shtml>; and “What Are Micro-Credentials,” Delaware Department of Education, <https://education.delaware.gov/educators/academic-support/standards-and-instruction/digital-de/professional-learning/micro-credentials/what-are-micro-credentials/>.

25 Even in states with no explicit policy, some local education agencies are opting to incorporate micro-credentials for educators in their approaches to professional learning and advancement.

26 Because this research is focused on state policies—and because determining how many of the thousands of EPPs across the country are leveraging micro-credentials would be very difficult—a tally of individual EPPs using micro-credentials is not offered in this report. However, in a September 11, 2024, Zoom interview with the authors, Jason Lange,

founder of BloomBoard, indicated that there are EPPs in nearly every state opting to use micro-credentials as part of their coursework. For example, Relay Graduate School of Education is approved in several states and relies heavily on micro-credentials in its curriculum. For more information, see Digital Promise, “Micro-Credentials: A Promising Way to Put Educators’ Skills Front and Center,” <https://digitalpromise.org/2016/02/22/micro-credentials-a-promising-way-to-put-educators-skills-front-and-center/>.

27 See Utah State Board of Education, “R277-304. Teacher Preparation Programs,” <https://schools.utah.gov/adminrules/R277-304>. The Utah educator preparation program approval forms for both elementary and secondary programs can be found here: “Elementary 2025 EI Ed and ECE EPP Competency Approval Template,” https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/19ZRA0JrRsgtDhe91SnTFcwo6OFpglCwiKtTmv6D_u_Y/edit?gid=1571238584#gid=1571238584; and “Secondary 2025 Secondary EPP Competency Approval Template,” <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pKTsvh2f0fRLcKTCu7SQjxECS0P-VVqqioDtD3DPKg8/edit?gid=1368830943#gid=1368830943>.

28 Utah State Board of Education, Program Endorsement Review Approval Template for Universities, Utah State Board of Education Endorsement Review, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/10fTYiVE7IUenQr5fxT3lt59hMZa4JXWY/edit?tab=t.0>.

29 A micro-credential stack is a collection of related micro-credentials organized around a theme. Completing a stack can provide the earner with a way to demonstrate a full skill set in a certain area or field and may lead to a broader credential. Examples of educator micro-credential stacks can be found at CarolinaCrED, Micro-credential Stacks, <https://tinyurl.com/yc8xcwrh>.

30 Curated professional development is typically offered for a subject the state perceives to add significant value to instruction (e.g., the science of reading, financial literacy, etc.). This training can be required or optional and it sometimes, but not always, leads to an endorsement (in which case it is also counted in the endorsement category) or credit for relicensure. It is different from state policy for license renewal credits because of its specificity: Whereas a state-created micro-credential about the science of reading may also be counted toward licensure credit, its development by a state does not necessarily indicate that the state has approved micro-credentials as a form of professional development that counts toward license renewal.

31 In some states, a customized version of the NEA's micro-credentials bank is provided by the relevant state affiliate, likely in order to meet the requirement that relicensure opportunities be offered by an approved provider. National Education Association, NEA Certification Bank (website), <https://nea.certificationbank.com/>.

32 North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, "Computer Science and Cybersecurity Credentials," <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/educators/credentials-and-certificates/computer-science-and-cybersecurity-credentials>.

33 District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, "Special Education Endorsement Recovery Initiative," <https://osse.dc.gov/page/spedfoundations>.

34 For examples, see Colleen McCann, Sasha Zuflacht, and Tierra Gilbert, *The Decade-Plus Teaching Career: How to Retain Effective Teachers Through Teacher Leadership* (Teach Plus, 2021), https://teachplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/decade-plus_final.pdf; and Questions 12 and 13 in Adrienne Fischer, Ben Erwin, Damion Pechota, and Eric Syverson, *50-State Comparison: Teacher Recruitment and Retention* (Education Commission of the States, December 1, 2022), <https://www.ecs.org/50-state-comparison-teacher-recruitment-and-retention-2022-2/>.

35 We are counting South Carolina's suggested currency for micro-credentials in guidance to LEAs, which ultimately have authority to determine the value of professional learning experiences for license renewal, in this total.

36 See Arkansas teacher induction example in "Importance of Iterative Implementation" section of Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-teacher-growth/findings/#3-developing-and-implementing-state-and-local-policies>.

37 Corey Murphy (Mississippi associate state superintendent, Office of Teaching and Leading), email with Lisette Partelow and Melissa Tooley, December 9, 2024; and Kristi Enger (Idaho director of educator certification), email with Lisette Partelow and Melissa Tooley on December 16, 2024.

38 Indiana's State Department of Education partnered with BloomBoard to fund 39 educators in completing coursework to earn computer science micro-credentials to expand computer science learning opportunities for PreK–12 students. Educators can count their micro-credentials toward earning a master's degree in Technology and Computer Science Education from a partnering higher education institution. See: Indiana Department of Education, "Computer Science," https://www.in.gov/doe/students/computer-science/#Educator_Professional_Development for additional detail.

39 Washington State, "Certification of Enrollment, Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1139" (2019: p. 57), <https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1139-S2.SL.pdf?cite=2019%20c%20295%20s%20306>.

40 For more on the qualities of a high-quality micro-credential, see "Designing and Assessing Micro-credential Offerings" in Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*, <https://tinyurl.com/bddbhbbe>.

41 Note that one of this report’s authors, Melissa Tooley, was an unpaid advisor on this work, along with several other experts. For more details on the partnership, see digiLEARN, “The Micro-Credentials Partnership of States,” <https://www.digilearn.org/partnership-of-states>.

42 H. Frank McKay, Teresa Webber, and W. Kyle Canulette, *Operationalizing Micro-Credential Quality Assurance Standards* (RTI International, June 2024), <https://www.digilearn.org/news/operationalizing-micro-credential-quality-assurance-standards>; and *Advancing Educator Effectiveness through Micro-Credential Quality Assurance Standards and Rubric: Tools for Assessing Micro-Credential Quality* (digiLEARN, May 2024), https://static1.squarespace.com/static/624c7ed1f5d1714b908a7715/t/663d350f351b7c0400e4530b/1725385586145/MPOS_RubricTools.pdf.

43 Myra Best (executive director of digiLEARN), email correspondence with authors, April 9, 2025, and Brendan O’Connor (executive director of Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board), email correspondence with authors, April 10, 2025.

44 These recommendations are adapted and updated from Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-teacher-growth/findings/#1-designing-and-assessing-micro-credential-offerings>; and Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A Model State Policy Guide*, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>.

45 In Illinois, professional development providers seeking to offer micro-credentials must submit documentation that their course is aligned with the

state’s rubric, which includes evaluation of the micro-credential’s design, alignment to the state teaching and learning standards, and the process for evaluation and evidence submission, according to the Illinois State Board of Education, “Illinois Educator Microcredential Framework,” <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-Microcredential-Framework.pdf>.

46 In fall 2024, North Carolina’s State Board of Education officially authorized the use of the Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) for LEAs to vet which micro-credentials educators can count toward relicensure requirements, and the Department of Public Instruction is currently working to use the QAS and associated rubric to develop educator micro-credentials for AI, digital data privacy, and integration of digital learning standards into curriculum (per email correspondence with Myra Best, digiLEARN’s executive director, on April 8, 2025).

47 Wyoming’s administrative rules specify aspects of quality control for educator micro-credentials; see *Program Approval Standards for Endorsement Areas*, Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board, https://wyomingptsb.com/wp-content/uploads/rules-regs/PTSB-Ch_4_01-31-2024.pdf.

48 Earners of micro-credentials are awarded a digital badge as proof of their accomplishment, but not all digital badges are obtained by earning micro-credentials. Digital badges can be awarded for something as simple as attending a conference training or completing a multiple-choice assessment, while earning high-quality micro-credentials requires successful application of the given competency. A 2015 survey of teachers by Digital Promise found that, of 19 distinct micro-credential benefits highlighted, teachers were least interested in displaying digital badges or sharing them on social media. See “Findings,” Tooley and Hood, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>. Additional educator perspective on digital badges was gleaned from RTI’s *NC Feasibility Study Report to the North Carolina*

Partnership for Micro-Credentials and “Micro-Credential Focus Group: Emerging Framing Ideas” (prepared for digiLEARN, unpublished, November 2020).

49 Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Elementary & Secondary Education, “Professional Learning Through Micro-Credentials,” <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/educator-effectiveness/educator-support--development/professional-learning-through-micro-credentials>.

50 Delaware Department of Education, “About DDOE Micro-Credential Programs,” <https://education.delaware.gov/educators/academic-support/standards-and-instruction/digital-de/professional-learning/micro-credentials/about-ddoe-micro-credential-programs/>.

51 Utah State Board of Education and The Utah Education Network, “Move Your Professional Learning Forward,” <https://www.uen.org/utahmicrocredentials/>.

52 See Illinois State Board of Education list of approved micro-credentials on its “Professional Learning” page, by expanding the second accordion menu at the bottom of the page, “List of ISBE-Approved Microcredentials,” <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/PD-Calendar.aspx>.

53 The Nevada Department of Education offers 50 micro-credentials on its “Nevada Professional Learning” page, <https://tinyurl.com/5ewx9wav>.

54 The Wyoming Department of Education has published the Wyoming Digital Learning Plan, which discusses how districts and schools can “provide incentives and/or support for educators to receive licensure, certifications, and micro-credentials for digital learning.” See Wyoming Department of Education, *Wyoming Digital Learning Plan: 2023–2028*, <https://edu.wyoming.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Wyoming-Digital-Learning-Plan-2023-2028.pdf>.

55 Arkansas initially used micro-credentials as part of its teacher induction program for beginning teachers and Tennessee had a pilot that used micro-credentials for relicensure. See Jenny DeMonte, *Micro-Credentials for Teachers: What Three Early Adopter States Have Learned So Far* (American Institutes for Research, 2017), <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Micro-Credentials-for-Teachers-September-2017.pdf>; and Tooley and Hood, *Harnessing Micro-Credentials for Teacher Growth: A National Review of Early Best Practices*, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>.

56 Tooley and Hood, <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/harnessing-micro-credentials-for-teacher-growth-a-model-state-policy-guide/>.

57 In some states, high school students can earn college credit for micro-credentials offered by the pre-educator preparation program Educators Rising, but these micro-credentials are not formally part of an educator preparation program or credentialing pathway and thus were not included in our tally of state educator preparation policies. See Educators Rising, “Microcredentials,” <https://educatorsrising.org/micro-credentials>.

58 State license renewal policies typically require educators to accrue a certain number of professional development credits over a specified period of time in order to maintain their license and practice in their current role.



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