

Teachers' Licensing Process and Requirements: A Step towards Quality Assurance of Teachers in Pakistan

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Abstract

The teachers in Pakistan are certified through different pre-service teacher training programs but still not given license for teaching in the classroom. However, efforts are being made to make a final and unified policy and a model for teachers' licensing by different experts and provincial institutions under government recommendations, particularly in Punjab. The present paper analyzed the review of related literature and perception of primary, elementary, and secondary level teachers about licensing criteria, barriers, and issues in teacher licensing, and proposed a model of Teacher Licensing in Punjab. The study was basically descriptive in nature, as the researchers collected the data from the teachers using semi-structured questionnaire. The researchers proposed the model of teacher licensing in the light of teachers' perception and document analysis regarding teachers licensing. All the teachers were considered as the population of the study. The sample of 600 teachers comprise 200 Primary School Teachers (PSTs), 200 Elementary School Teachers (ESTs), and 200 Secondary School Teachers (SSTs) which was selected using equal allocation approach of stratified random sampling. The teachers favored that academic qualification, professional qualification, and written exam may be the bases for obtaining a license to teach. Two types of licenses i.e. initial and professional are proposed for PSTs, ESTs, SSTs in Licensing Model with certain requirements.

Key Words: Certification, Licensing, Licensing criteria/Requirements, Licensing Model

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

A certified teacher is a teacher who has earned qualifications from a reliable source, such as the government, a higher education institution or a private source. Certification can be defined as licensure of an educator and the awarding of a teacher,

administrative, special services, or limited certificate to a qualified applicant (Department of Education and Early Development, 2010). According to the definition given by OregonLaws (2013), "License" means consent to practice, either

by license or certification. A licensed teacher is one that has been granted proper acknowledgment of the ability to teach (USAID Teacher Education Project, 2013). Certification to teach indicates that you have been approved by the concerned authorities to teach students in the public school system. Potential teachers must fulfill the requirement set by state which may include the educational and testing standards; they have to meet (State of Texas, 2013). According to USAID teacher education project (2013) defined that teacher certification "is the process by which prospective teachers get licensed to teach within a given area after completing required coursework, degrees, tests and other specific criteria".

Newton (2013) reported that the teacher preparation and certification programs in different countries as in Canada the general requirements are an undergraduate university degree along with a one- or two-year Bachelors of Education or equivalent. In secondary education, teachers must have a definite number of university credits related to their subject field, to get a degree. Mostly teacher employers who are successful applicants, are required to complete criminal record checks, verification that employee is not suffered in Child Abuse,

tuberculosis test and level of experience criteria.

The teachers in France are recruited by competitive examination. They are required the previously gained academic education from any college and obtain professional education in University Institutes for Teachers Training. There are six categories of teachers in Public service of France: Primary education teachers, junior high school teachers, private schools teachers, vocational high schools teachers, sport teachers, and the sixth category is high school teacher, which are required to have at least Master degree and to pass the aggregate competitive exam. All the six categories have their own level of certificate to teach in certain fields.

In Indonesia, many school teachers from the public and private sectors have participated in National certification program since 2007. The requirements for this program are: a). A four-year diploma or an undergraduate degree from a recognized higher education institution; b). Junior teachers are encouraged to participate in a teacher certification program through a training that remains two semesters; c). Senior teachers are required in teacher certification through assessment of portfolio; d). Successful participants obtain an "Educator

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Certificate" which entitles the holders to avail chances for career promotion and financial incentives.

In Wales and England teachers must have gained, in the maintained sector a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). In England all qualified teachers must serve, legal one year induction period after training that must be passed to remain a registered teacher. In Wales this period remains for two years. The requirements are the Degree and on-job structured training, ITP course/program i.e. a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), and assessment against national standards of Qualified Teacher Status which is done by Agency/Department for Education, School Centered Initial Teacher Training accredited group and Higher Education Institution (Huffman, 2013).

The rules and measures for certification vary state by state, in the United States, and are observed by the state Department of Education. Generally, a bachelor's degree in a certifiable subject is a minimum requirement, along with precise coursework in pedagogical strategies and practical experiences in field as "student teachers." Most of the states also require that teachers qualify standardized exams held at the state or national levels related to the subjects they teach and also the methods of teaching

these subjects (NBPTS, 2013). In few cases, a license obtained to teach in one state can make possible the obtainment of another state license. To get a permanent certified, many states need teachers to pass exams on general knowledge, pedagogy, and knowledge of a content area. Some states also require teacher to be fingerprinted before certification (Brown, 2013).

In United States, there are two companies responsible to develop and administer the teacher certification tests are Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson. ETS conduct the Praxis tests, standardized across the nation, while Pearson group customize each testing program offered by the individual state (Newton, 2013). Brown (2013) reported the assessment process of National Board Certification as its requirements to complete include the assessment of portfolio about classroom practice including students' work samples, videotapes of teachers' teaching, and assessment of content knowledge through test held at a computer-based testing center.

Different Models and Types of Certificates and Requirements are in practice in different States of United States. In State of Florida, two types of Educators' Certificates; the temporary and

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the professional certificate are offered by the state of Florida. The temporary certificate is valid for three years, and nonrenewable. The applicant is required to complete whole application process, a bachelor's degree holder, showing subject mastery about area Knowledge and receiving a 2.5 GPA for a requested subject. To get the Temporary Certificate, the individual has to employ in a Florida school and their fingerprints are cleared. The Professional Certificate is Valid for five school years, and is renewable. The applicant is required to complete whole application process, a bachelor's degree holder, showing Subject mastery about subject Knowledge, general knowledge, education competence and professional preparation. To issue the professional certificate, the individuals' finger prints have to be clear (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

The State of New York offered four types of certification and licensing. Initial Certificate is the entry-level certificate for a teacher which is issued for specific subject or grade titles. It is valid for 5 year and leads to attainment of professional certificate. Professional Certificate is an advanced-level certificate for a teacher which is issued in particular subject or grade titles. It is valid on continuous basis when required professional development

hours are completed on five years cycle of professional development. Provisional Certificate is the certificate of entry-level for beginner employees' professionals, issued in specific subject or grade titles. It is valid for 5 year and leads to attainment of permanent Certificate. Permanent Certificate is the certificate of advance-level for beginner employees' professionals, issued in specific subject or grade titles. It is valid for life, unless New York State Education Department revokes for cause (New York State Education Department, 2012).

The State of Alaska offers four types of certificates i.e. Initial Teacher Certificate, Second Initial Teacher Certificate, Professional Teacher Certificate, and Master Teacher Certificate. The requirements are official transcripts completing the required course work according to the level of the teachers for certification/qualified an approved teacher education program, Approved basic competency exam (BCE for initial teacher two year certificates, initial out of state teacher certificate, Second initial teacher certificate, and professional teacher certification, Passing score in Content area Exam Praxis I and Praxis II) according to required certificate i.e. professional teacher certificate, Teaching experience of two years for professional

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teacher certificate, Finger Prints card, Recommendation (SR). Master Teacher Certificate meets all requirements for the Professional certificate and additionally holds current National Board certification issued by NBPTS. The Master certificate is valid for ten (10) years and is renewable (Division of Teaching and Learning Support, State of Alaska, 2013).

In State of Washington, Residency Certificate is the regular certificate of first level that is received by the majority of applicants. Professional Certificate is the regular certificate of advanced level which is received by those applicants who have received the residency certificate and worked in Washington as educator. Substitute certificate is valid for life and 'Limited Teaching Certificates' is for those employers who could not find adequate number of teachers having regular certificates, desire to appoint an applicant that is not eligible for regular certificate. In Public schools of Washington, teachers are required to receive a valid certificate of teaching. The teacher certification requirements are a bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement; Getting of Teacher education or preparation program approved by state; Teachers must qualify a test of basic skills. There are two categories of testing in

Institutional Recommendation (IR), State Washington i.e. testing related to content area and basic skills (State of Washington, 2013).

In Massachusetts, Preliminary License is valid for 5 years of employment, for those who have not qualified an approved program of educator preparation. It requires Bachelor's Degree and passing Marks on Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure. There may be some additional coursework for some other licenses. Temporary License is valid for 1 year, and issues to experienced teachers from other state. It requires 3 Years teaching under Out-of-State License. Initial License is valid for 5 years of service, and can be extended once for additional 5 years of service. It requires Bachelor's Degree, passing marks on Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL), and completion of a program for teacher preparation and Professional License is Valid for 5 year. It requires 3 year of service under initial license, achievement of a teacher induction program, as one additional requirement for professional license (Massachusetts department of elementary and secondary education, 2013).

In net shell, the criteria used for teacher licensing and certification in global

perspective are academic qualification, teacher preparation program, competency based exam/test, induction training, portfolio assessment, interviews, certification boards/organizations, criminal record verification, and medical test.

I. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Analyze the review of literature regarding the criteria of teachers' licensing in different countries.
- ii. Assess the perception of teachers about criteria, barriers, and issues in teacher licensing.
- iii. Propose a model of teachers' licensing at primary, elementary, and secondary level in the province of Punjab.

II. Methodology

All the teachers of District Mianwali were considered as the population of the study. The sample of 600 teachers was selected by convenient sampling technique from three strata i.e. Primary School

III. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The close-ended item data was analyzed through simple percentages and frequencies.

Table 1

Question 1: In your view, is teaching a profession?

| Respondents | Yes | | No | | N |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | |
| PSTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |
| ESTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |
| SSTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |

Teachers (200), Elementary School Teachers (200), and Secondary School Teachers (200), using equal allocation. The semi-structured questionnaire was discussed with three experts. All experts have more than ten years' experience of pre-service and in-service teacher education regarding face and content validity of the instrument. It was improved in the light of their suggestions. The study was basically qualitative as the researchers collected the data from the teachers using semi-structured questionnaire and analyzed the data using frequencies and percentages. The data from close-ended items were analyzed through simple frequencies and percentages of the teachers' responses. The open ended items responses were analyzed through thematic analysis. The researcher proposed the model of teacher licensing in the light of their perception about the criteria, terms and conditions of licensing, because teachers are the main stakeholders.

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Table 1 show that alltheteachers of each category believed that teaching area profession.

Table 2

Question 2: If teaching is a profession, should it be regulated like other professions such as Medicine by PMDC; Engineering by Pakistan Engineering Council; Lawyers by Bar Councils?

| Respondents | Yes | | No | | N |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | |
| PSTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |
| ESTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |
| SSTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |

Table 2 shows that all the teachers agreed that teaching should be regulated like other professions such as Medicine by PMDC, Engineering by Pakistan Engineering Council, and Lawyers by Bar Councils.

Table 3

Question 3: If you are serving teacher with experience, will you be willing to go through the requirements for obtaining a license to teach? (Only for teachers)

| Respondents | Yes | | No | | N |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | |
| PSTs | 140 | 70 | 60 | 30 | 200 |
| ESTs | 136 | 68 | 64 | 32 | 200 |
| SSTs | 200 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 200 |

Table 3 shows that 70 % PSTs, 68% ESTs, and 100% SSTs agreed that they are willing to go through the requirements for obtaining a license to teach.

Table 4

Question 4: If a sound knowledge of practical demonstration of National Professional Standards (NPST) is a requirement for obtaining a teaching license, will you be willing to have your classroom teaching evaluated in order to obtain a teaching license?

| Respondents | Yes | | No | | N |
|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | |
| PSTs | 111 | 55 | 89 | 45 | 200 |
| ESTs | 127 | 63 | 73 | 37 | 200 |
| SSTs | 116 | 58 | 84 | 42 | 200 |

Table 4 shows that 55% PSTs, 63% ESTs, and 58% SSTs agreed that if a sound knowledge of and, practical demonstration of National Professional Standards (NPST) would be a requirement for obtaining a teaching license. They will be willing to have their classroom teaching evaluated in order to obtain a teaching license while 45% PSTs, 37% ESTs and 42% SSTs disagreed with this.

Table 5

Question 5: What should be the bases for obtaining a license to teach?

| Respondents | Percentages | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------------|----|----------------------------|----|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|------------|-----|
| | Academic Qualification | | Professional Qualification | | Length of Experience | | Written Exam/Test | | Internship | |
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| PSTs | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| ESTs | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| SSTs | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 5 | 95 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 |

Table 5 shows that all the teachers favored that academic qualification, professional qualification and written exam should be the bases for obtaining a license to teach. All the teachers disfavored the length of experience and internship as the bases for obtaining a license to teach.

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Table 6

Question 6: Should licenses be mandatory only for: future teachers, currently serving teachers or both?

| Respondents | Future Teachers (%) | | Currently Serving Teachers (%) | | Both for Future and currently serving Teachers (%) | |
|-------------|---------------------|----|--------------------------------|----|--|----|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| PSTs | 60 | 40 | 50 | 50 | 100 | 0 |
| ESTs | 80 | 20 | 90 | 10 | 100 | 0 |
| SSTs | 82 | 18 | 75 | 25 | 100 | 0 |

Table 6 shows that all the teachers favored that license should be mandatory for both future teachers and currently serving teachers.

Question 7- What incentives should be offered to serving teachers to go through the process of licensing?

| Incentives | PSTs Yes (%) | ESTs Yes (%) | SSTs Yes (%) |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Financial incentives | 90 | 92 | 85 |
| Honorary certificate | 100 | 85 | 100 |
| Foreign trainings | 10 | 0 | 5 |
| Any other | Nil | Nil | Nil |

As the question was open ended and through analysis of different responses it was found that majority of the teachers suggested financial incentive and honorary certificate to be the incentive for serving teachers to go through process of licensing..

Question 8-What are the key issues and challenges/Barriers for teacher licensing in Pakistan

Following points were summarized from the teachers' responses:

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- Social and teachers acceptance level may create hindrances in teacher licensing initiative.
- Political interference in the process of licensing and certification may halt the transparent and merit based licensing.
- Foundation of a teacher certification board is a dire need for effective licensing, but at the same time it is a great challenge for government with regard to the funding arrangement for that purposes.
- At initiating level, too much requirements and strict criteria for licensing may create dissatisfaction among teachers.
- Lack of mutual co-ordination among the departments about matters of transfers, deputations, promotions, and pay package grades may create disturbance among the teachers and administrators.
- Teachers may not be satisfied and mentally prepare for including in the process of licensing without some incentives provision to teachers for licensing.

IV. Conclusions

All the teachers agreed that teaching is a profession and it should be regulated like

other professions by councils or boards. Teachers showed willingness to go through the requirements for obtaining a license to teach. Average number of teachers agreed that if a sound knowledge of practical demonstration of National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST) would be a requirement for obtaining a teaching license, they will be willing to have their classroom teaching evaluated in order to obtain a teaching license. All the teachers favored that academic qualification, professional qualification, and written exam may be the bases for obtaining a license to teach while all the teachers disfavored the length of experience and internship as the bases for obtaining a license to teach. They viewed that licenses may be mandatory for both future teachers and currently serving teachers. Teachers said that financial incentives and honorary certificate should be offered to serving teachers to go through the process of licensing. The barriers they perceived in process of teacher licensing are: social and teachers acceptance level, political, funding for the establishment of a Teacher Certification Board, at initiating stage too much requirements and strict criteria for licensing, lack of mutual co-ordination among the departments about matters of

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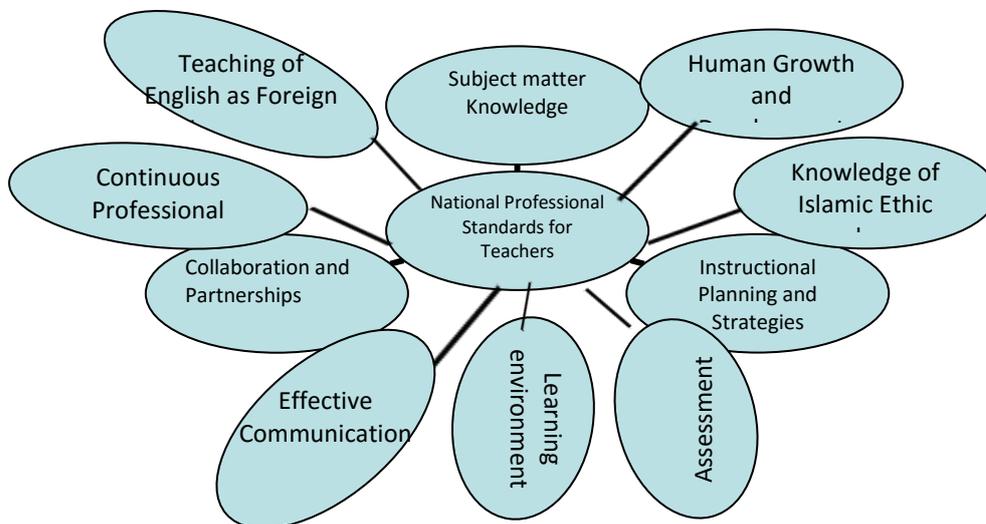
transfers, depositions, promotions, and pay-packages.

Proposed Models for Teachers Licensing

The major objective of the study was to propose a model for teachers' licensing at primary, elementary, and secondary level in the province of Punjab. Therefore, two types of models for teachers' licenses i.e. initial and professional for PSTs, ESTs, and SSTs with certain requirements on the basis of findings and conclusion are proposed. The initial teachers' license may be issued when his/her performance during

induction training (attendance, lesson planning and teaching) is satisfactory and he/she passed competency based exam at the end of the induction training. The professional teachers license may be issued to teachers when they qualify competency based exam (content based and pedagogy) and performance evaluation regarding NPST by NTS (National Testing Service)/PTCB (Provincial Teacher Certification Board)/DSD (Directorate of Staff Development). The NPST in Pakistan provide theoretical framework for teachers' performance evaluation for licensing.

Theoretical framework for Evaluation of Teachers' Performance



Proposed Model of Licensing for Primary School Teachers

| Initial Teacher License | Professional Teacher License |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Initial Primary School Teacher License Requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Qualification BA/BSc • Qualified Teacher Preparation program i.e. B. Ed (Elementary), • Performance during Induction Training (Attendance, Lesson Planning and teaching) • Competency Based Exam at the end of the induction training (Primary level Content based) <p>Testing By: Local/District Government</p> <p>Validity: one Year</p> <p>Leads To: Professional Primary Teacher License</p> | <p>Professional Primary Teacher License</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements and Testing: Competency based Exam (content based and pedagogy) by NTS (National Testing Service)/PTCB(Provincial Teacher Certification Board)/DSD (Directorate of Staff Development) • Performance Evaluation regarding NPST by representatives of above mentioned organizations <p>Validity: 5 Years Renewable</p> |
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Proposed Model of Licensing for Elementary School Teachers

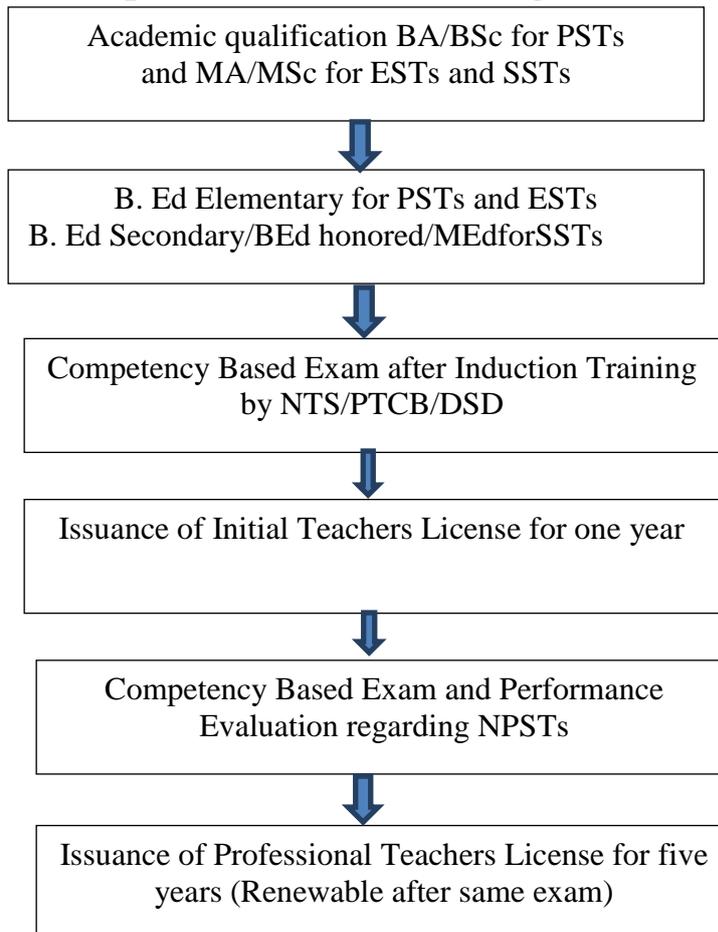
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| <p>Initial Elementary School Teacher License Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Qualification MA/MSc • Qualified Teacher Preparation program i.e. B. Ed (Elementary) • Performance during Induction Training (Attendance, Lesson Planning and teaching) • Competency based Exam at the end of the induction training (Elementary Level Content based) <p>Testing By: Local/District Government</p> <p>Validity: one Year</p> <p>Leads to: Professional Elementary Teacher License</p> | <p>Professional Elementary Teacher License</p> <p>Requirements and Testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency based Exam (content based and pedagogy) by NTS (National Testing Service)/PTCB(Provincial teacher Certification Board)/DSD (Directorate of Staff Development) • Performance Evaluation regarding NPST by representatives of above mentioned organizations <p>Validity: 5 Years Renewable</p> |
|--|---|

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Proposed Model of Licensing for Secondary School Teachers

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Initial Secondary School Teacher License Requirements:</p> <p>Academic Qualification MA/MSc/MPhil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified Teacher Preparation program i.e. BEd (Secondary, B. Ed Honours, MEd), Performance during Induction Training (Attendance, Lesson Planning and teaching) • Competency based Exam at the end of the induction training (Secondary Level Content based) <p>Testing By: NTS (existing)/PTCB(may be developed)/DSD(Existing)</p> <p>Validity: one Year</p> <p>Leads to: Professional Secondary Teacher License</p> | <p>Professional Secondary Teacher License Requirements and Testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency based Exam (content based and pedagogy) by NTS (National Testing Service)/PTCB(Provincial teacher Certification Board)/DSD (Directorate of Staff Development) • Performance Evaluation regarding NPST representatives of above mentioned organizations <p>Validity: 5 YearsRenewable</p> |
|--|--|

Flow chart of the Proposed Models of Licensing for Teachers



V. Recommendations

- Teachers may be provided with the financial and promotion related incentives for licensing from government in order to motivate the teachers for acceptance of this initiative.
- There may be mutual co-ordination among the departments for managerial purposes of deputations and promotions etc.
- The requirements of the licensing may be teacher friendly and may be prepared by involving teachers' representative of all teachers' unions representing different designations.
- A teacher certification board or council may be established under Directorate of Staff Development (DSD), Punjab to regulate the teacher licensing.
- Teacher licensing may be strictly based on merit and all types of political interference may be eliminated by developing transparent criteria by Punjab Education Department and teacher certification board.

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