

Title: Wasatch Front Consortium APPEL Program Candidate Complaints REDACTED

Date: 11/17/2023



The following emails have been received from Wasatch Front Consortium APPEL Program candidates outlining their grievances with their program.

[REDACTED] Elementary Teacher
Mountain West Montessori Academy

Hite, Malia

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 8:01 AM
To: Hite, Malia
Cc: Grove, Andrew; Moss, James; Earl, Jennie; Hart, Molly; zobrist@hawthornacademy.org
Subject: AEL Requirements

Dear Malia,

Several colleagues and I have experienced incredible frustration in our pursuit to obtain professional licensure through the APPEL program from our LEA. I am in the second year of the APPEL program with the Wasatch Front Consortium. I graduated from Westminster College with a BA in Educational Studies and a minor in TESOL in 2021. I worked with infants and toddlers in Montessori schools before discovering my passion for teaching in September 2021. I was given a plan to obtain professional licensure from my LEA in May of 2022. I worked hard to complete all the requirements within the first year and received a score of 45 on the PPAT assessment.

The consortium returned and told me I was missing a class not on my original plan. I took the class and resubmitted. The consortium came back a second time and told me another one of my classes would not count. I did not want to spend more time and money for nothing, so I went to USBE searching for answers. USBE said the consortium has the same authority as a university and could issue my license anytime. They (USBE) felt the Wasatch Front Consortium should issue my license because I met all of the requirements on the plan. The consortium said the state had to issue my license. I have asked for verification from the consortium that if I take the course, they will issue my license, but they have yet to confirm.

I have spent so much time and money trying to obtain my professional license, and I cannot get any real answers. I am a full-time [REDACTED] teacher (overseeing 45 students), and I have spent my personal time and money to become a professional educator. Yet, I still don't have a professional license. I see why we have a teacher shortage now. I am considering leaving the teaching profession due to this matter. I love teaching, and I want to stay in this profession, but I can't continue putting in time and money with no results. I deserve my teaching license, and so do my colleagues. We have done everything on our APPEL plans from the consortium with little support. We are highly qualified and deserve the licenses we have worked hard for. Please consider re-examining the APPEL program and its implementation in the Wasatch Front Consortium. Will you please respond to this email by the end of the week? Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

Date: 11/17/2023

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Contact Person and Email: Malia Hite, malia.hite@schools.utah.gov

This is for consideration during the December 8, 2023 Law & Licensing Committee meeting.
Rule/Statute: R277-114, R277-301, R277-303, and R277-304

Title: Wasatch Front Consortium APPEL Program Candidate Complaints REDACTED

Date: 11/17/2023



[REDACTED] English Teacher
Quest Academy Charter School

Hite, Malia

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, June 17, 2023 12:33 PM
To: Hite, Malia
Cc: szobrist@hawthornacademy.org; Grove, Andrew; Capella, Camilla; McLachlan, Lisa; fstensrud@hawthornacademy.org
Subject: Re: 761512 License Reverted
Attachments: [REDACTED] Transcript.pdf, [REDACTED] Transcript.pdf

Thank you, Malia.

Shannon and Floyd,

In my previous email I mentioned working with my APPEL program directors, but it sounds like the person I've worked with over the past few years wasn't actually my APPEL program director. My school, Quest Academy Charter School, instructed me to work with their staff member named Susan Goldsberry to obtain my Professional Educator License. In 2021 Susan informed me that I needed to complete courses to fulfill requirements to meet the Professional Educator License competencies. Before enrolling in the courses, Susan confirmed that the courses I planned to enroll in would fulfill all remaining requirements for the Professional Educator License. I took the courses, provided transcripts, and was then awarded my license on 9/20/2021.

The letter that I received in January 2023 (more than a year after I was awarded my license) informed me that a mistake was made, and that I shouldn't have received my license due to requirements missing in my file. According to the letter, the license requirements in which my file was found to be deficient were:

- Documentation of Intro to Special Education
- Documentation of Instruction, Technology, Assessment and Planning

I completed courses for both requirements in 2021. I have attached 2 transcripts, one from Salt Lake Community College, and another from The University of Phoenix. I provided both transcripts to the staff member at my school and was reassured that the issue with my license would be resolved, so I assumed that she was communicating with someone at USBE to resolve this for me. That is why this recent notice about my license being reverted is unexpected. Please review the documentation attached as evidence.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Date: 11/17/2023

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Contact Person and Email: Malia Hite, malia.hite@schools.utah.gov

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Rule/Statute: R277-114, R277-301, R277-303, and R277-304

Title: Wasatch Front Consortium APPEL Program Candidate Complaints REDACTED

Date: 11/17/2023



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2023 4:22 PM
To: Hite, Malia <Malia.Hite@schools.utah.gov>
Subject: Fwd: 761512 License Reverted

Dear Malia,

I'm wondering if you could help me. I just received notice that my Utah Educator License was reverted to an Associate Secondary License with an Associate English Endorsement, with an expiration date of 6/30/2023. Does this mean that after this date my license will expire?

This notice comes as a surprise to me. In January I was notified that it was found that I had not completed requirements for the license that I was awarded. This was also a surprise as my APPEL Program Director had already assured me that I had completed all of the requirements. After receiving this notice in January, I met with my APPEL Program Director along with someone from the Utah State Board of Education to discuss classes that I had completed that should fulfill the uncompleted requirements. My APPEL Program Director at the time indicated that she would resolve this issue for me and that I shouldn't worry about it.

I just accepted an offer for a new teaching position in the State, so this notification about my license being reverted is very concerning. Because my APPEL Program Director has now communicated on multiple occasions that I've fulfilled all requirements for licensure, I'm wondering if you could direct me to someone at the Utah State Board of Education that can talk to me about this?

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Date: 11/17/2023

Click or tap here to enter text.

Contact Person and Email: Malia Hite, malia.hite@schools.utah.gov

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Date: 11/17/2023



[REDACTED] Elementary Teacher
Mountain West Montessori Academy

Hite, Malia

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 9:48 PM
To: Hite, Malia
Subject: AEL concerns

Dear Malia,

My name is [REDACTED] and I'm currently enrolled in the AEL program. I have been working on obtaining my professional teaching license for about a year and a half now while also being a full time teacher. I graduated cum laude with a B.S in Education from a private institution in Massachusetts. I have been teaching first, second, and third grade since 2021. In the two and a half years I've been teaching, I received my LETRS certificate and became Montessori certified.

I am writing to you to share my experience with the AEL program and highlight my frustrations. As I previously mentioned, I have a bachelor's degree in education, but the consortium decided I needed additional courses to receive my license. I struggle to understand why a teacher with a bachelor's degree in education needs to go through all of these additional courses, essentially discrediting my degree from a private institution. At first, the consortium selected 5 courses for me to take after "reviewing my transcripts," equivalent of a college semester. However, when I sent an email highlighting several courses that fit the requirement the consortium was looking for, they removed three classes. If I didn't advocate for myself, I would have taken three courses that I did not need to.

In addition, my AEL plan has been changed on several occasions without notifying me. Originally, there was an elementary science course on my plan. I cannot decisively say when the consortium decided I no longer needed to, but they removed it without telling me. This is frustrating because I had every intention of enrolling in the course and spending \$300 of my own money. I was also told I need to take a sped 101 course, but then the consortium decided later that I did not, with yet again no notification.

Our consortium liaison has come to the school twice since I've been enrolled in the program and does not answer emails. During our visits, she is hesitant to answer questions and seems to lack the answers. According to my AEL plan, I will receive my license after the completion of the PPAT. After hearing horror stories of classes being added just as they are going to receive their license from colleagues, I decided to double check with our liaison. Her response was not assuring at all: "you should be done and I can't say for certain." She also asked me if I had taken a micro-credential for one of my courses and when I said I did not, she said "oh good, that wouldn't have counted." I was recommended to complete this micro-credential by my assistant principal and my assistant principal gets that information from the consortium. The consortium won't even make time to meet with people to have a conversation about these changes.

In conclusion, the AEL program is disorganized and will be contributing to the teacher shortage. I love teaching and it gives me so much meaning, but I am tired of constantly having to prove myself. I am tired of changes being made on my plan without notice. I am tired of spending so much money, just to make a teacher salary. My bachelor's degree in education in junction with two years in my own classroom, PPAT, Praxis, and two courses should warrant a license. My colleagues and I deserve to know and understand the requirements for our licenses. Our plans should be grandfathered in to prevent these heartbreaking changes.

Thank you for taking time to read this email.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED] Elementary teacher at MWMA

[REDACTED] English Teacher

Date: 11/17/2023

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Contact Person and Email: Malia Hite, malia.hite@schools.utah.gov

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Title: Wasatch Front Consortium APPEL Program Candidate Complaints REDACTED

Date: 11/17/2023



Mountain West Montessori Academy

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 1:09 PM
To: Grove, Andrew <andrew.grove@schools.utah.gov>; Moss, James <James.Moss@schools.utah.gov>; Earl, Jennie <Jennie.Earl@schools.utah.gov>; Hart, Molly <Molly.Hart@schools.utah.gov>; szobrist@hawthornacademy.org Subject: AEL Issues and Concerns

Dear Malia,

I was contacted by another coworker who has experienced similar frustrations about the current function and support offered by the current AEL program. I have drafted this email hoping for someone willing to make a difference in the educational world. I am hoping that at least one person who reads this email can make a difference in our current situation. First of all, I want to thank you for the progress you have already tried to make in the AEL program. I appreciate your efforts. I also appreciate your willingness to hear and try to understand our frustrations and concerns. It means more than anything that someone is listening.

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a year and a half into the AEL program, but I have been told I have made great progress in my efforts to obtain licensure. I attended school at Brigham Young University Hawaii and graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.A. in English and minors in Creative Writing, Psychology, and French. I also graduated with a CRLA Certified Writing Tutor's License. This certificate allows me to operate as a reading and writing tutor internationally. I have taken nearly every English class offered at BYUH. These classes include tutoring English, general English, Creative Writing, Literary Theory, workshops to reach students with disabilities, ELL training, and I spent most of my college career tutoring students from 75+ countries daily to help them increase their reading and writing skills. I have spent time since then gaining in-classroom experience as a SPED Aide for the alternative school in Cache Valley and I am currently in my second year of teaching ELA at MWMA Middle School. All of these experiences and certifications have helped me toward achieving my goal of becoming a licensed teacher.

When I began teaching at MWMA I sat down with my principal, vice-principal, and our consortium liaison, Shannon Zobrist who informed me that I would have to complete a PLP to help me to go from an associate's license in teaching to a professional license that would be recognized by the Utah State Board of Education. I have since been told that this plan may not be enough to get my licensure approved. I have observed many different teachers, received teaching mentoring, and taken 22+ credits of classes in my first year of teaching and over the summer, all of which I paid for completely out of pocket with no financial assistance or additional stipend to supplement my additional training. Reflecting, this means I have spent about \$2500 on classes this calendar year that do not count toward a degree, and I am now being told they may not even count toward the licensure requirements. In a recent email from Shannon, she expressed that she had been told that many candidates in our consortium had not been approved and there was no way to know if approval would be granted until we submitted our application for licensure. It feels like we are throwing darts at a map hoping that we will land in a place that isn't going to cause us to drown in the middle of the ocean. I have no confirmation that the work I have put in will get me to my goal and so many others are in the same sinking boat with me.

It has been exhausting to work full-time and complete this number of credits, but I have worked hard, and I am a better teacher after the additional training. For all of these classes, I excelled in my classes, and I currently have a 4.0 GPA for the classes I took due to my learning plan. Not only did I meet the requirements given, but I have excelled substantially. I have spent the first few months of teaching this year preparing for and taking the PPAT Exam. I have had no assistance with this exam, and I have had to find all the resources to help me to complete the exam portions on my own. My mentors have never seen the exam or received training about how to prepare me for the exam. I have received zero personal feedback on my responses, and I am just hoping that I am meeting the requirements. I am doing the best that I can.

Date: 11/17/2023

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Contact Person and Email: Malia Hite, malia.hite@schools.utah.gov

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Although I have made considerable progress in my pursuit of a license, I have experienced several avoidable frustrations. I am communicating these because I hope that our state can improve. First of all, a plan to help each individual achieve a professional license is necessary, but there should be some changes made. I believe that candidates seeking licensure should begin the process with a carefully mapped plan that is signed off by accredited individuals before they begin spending money on classes. There should be a contract between that individual and the state that the proposed plan, once completed, will grant licensure.

Next, when I inquired with my consortium about what classes to take, I was met with confusion and uncertainty. There needs to be individual, or written resources that can help individuals who are signing up for classes ensure they are signing up for the correct classes. The classes have different names at different universities, and this makes it difficult to know what classes fit the requirements needed. I think that with the uncertainty, the lack of financial assistance for these classes was quite a burden for me.

Moving on, my most recent correspondence about my APPEL plan was an email that stated that even if I passed the PPAT, there was no guarantee that the classes that I have spent money on and used my personal time while working full time would even count toward my license. It feels like once I meet the requirements, someone will change their mind and decide that another class is required. Candidates I have talked to about these issues have expressed the same feeling of being on this treadmill this program has created and feeling like eventually they will not be able to run any longer. The national teacher shortage is no secret, and this current program is denying willing participants the opportunity to teach and use their skills and talents to enrich the educational and future success of students in Utah. We need to organize our plans in a way that points our requirements to our common goal of creating meaningful learning opportunities for students. We cannot claim to be serving our students if we are denying qualified and driven applicants from their goals for licensure.

I think that we can all agree that the best method to gain work experience is to gain hands-on experience. I would argue that the majority of our AEL candidates are far more qualified than the average college graduate who can obtain licensure in a much shorter and organized process. I did not know that my professional talents would best be utilized as a teacher until I spent time in the classroom. This is why I did not pursue an education degree. I plan to spend my career as a teacher. Because of the dysfunctional elements of this program, I have contemplated changing careers or moving states to pursue a license elsewhere. I am sure I would face obstacles, but confident that it would not be nearly as disorganized, challenging, and discouraging as this program has been thus far. I am hoping to gain your support in seeking reform for the AEL program. I propose that we re-examine the planning process, the financial burden, and the lack of resources that the program currently has, and we choose to create an organized, accredited, and successful program to allow individuals who want to teach to be able to do their jobs without exhausting them in the process before they even get there. There should be set and approved plans in place before a candidate begins taking classes. I am willing to do the work, I just need to know what is required and I need someone who can provide accurate and credible information along the way.

Thank you for your support,

 ELA Director

Date: 11/17/2023

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Contact Person and Email: Malia Hite, malia.hite@schools.utah.gov

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