



CLEARINGHOUSE
Handbook for Local Education
Agencies (LEAs)

July 2019

INTRODUCTION

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) is dedicated to providing leadership and support to those responsible for the preparation, certification/licensure, employment, ethical and professional practice and continuing professional development of educators. NASDTEC members share the belief that all students are entitled to have educators who are held to high ethical and professional standards.

The Educator Identification Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) was created by NASDTEC members to facilitate the mobility of certificated/licensed¹ educators while protecting students from educators who have been found unfit to practice. Information is submitted to the Clearinghouse by licensing agencies such as state education agencies, and independent licensing boards in the United States, the District of Columbia, the Canadian province of Ontario, Guam, and the United States Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA). The Clearinghouse provides a mechanism for licensing agencies to share names of educators whose certificates, licenses or similar credentials authorizing them to engage in school professions have been denied, revoked, suspended, surrendered or otherwise adversely acted upon.

Participants in the Clearinghouse have the obligation to submit accurate and timely information about educators against whom **final** adverse certification/license action has been taken and the right to access similar information submitted by other NASDTEC members. The efficacy of the Clearinghouse is dependent on each jurisdiction's commitment to prompt and accurate reporting.

In addition, NASDTEC has provided both public and private local educational agencies (LEAs) with the opportunity to subscribe to the Clearinghouse for the purpose of supplementing their existing background checks on prospective employees. LEAs that subscribe to the Clearinghouse have read-only access to the Clearinghouse. LEAs can view all the information of each record, however, the personal identification information is redacted to include only the year of birth and the last four digits of the CERT_ID. (Due to state law, records submitted by California which do not show any of the CERT_ID or date of birth.)

This handbook is intended to provide subscribing LEAs with a guide to effective and full participation in the Clearinghouse and to specify best practices that ensure the protection of all students and to limit the mobility of educators to those who are fit to serve.

¹ The terms "license" and "certificate" are used interchangeably.

HISTORY OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE

Early in the 1960s, NASDTEC recognized that the increased mobility of educators coupled with inconsistent communication across jurisdictional boundaries posed significant challenges to licensing regulatory bodies in identifying educators from outside of their jurisdiction who had had their credentials denied, suspended, revoked or otherwise adversely acted upon for cause. In an effort to facilitate communication among jurisdictions, NASDTEC created the Clearinghouse through an agreement among all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, the U.S. Territories, Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario. The Clearinghouse has been fully operational since approximately 1987, with disciplinary data spanning from 1972 to the present.

Under the original Clearinghouse Agreement, each member jurisdiction agreed:

- to furnish the names of individuals whose certificates, licenses or similar credentials authorizing them to engage in one or more of the public elementary and secondary school professions have been revoked, suspended or otherwise acted upon adversely for cause or whose applications for such credentials have been denied for cause within the period from and after January 1, 1972;
- to supplement the initial list on a *monthly* basis;
- to provide only information that reflects final actions and that are matters of *public* record;
- to use the information provided through the Clearinghouse in accordance with the laws, regulations and practices of the receiving state; and
- to contact the submitting jurisdiction directly to inquire about an educator whose name has been entered into the Clearinghouse.

While the Acknowledgment of the Terms and Conditions of Participation in the NASDTEC Educator Identification Clearinghouse (Acknowledgment)² has supplanted the Clearinghouse Agreement, the intent of the agreement and the obligations thereunder remain the same.

The exchange of information via the Clearinghouse has always been intended to serve as an **alert** only.

Neither member jurisdictions nor subscribing LEAs should ever take action solely based on the existence of an educator record in the Clearinghouse. When an educator has been reported to the Clearinghouse by another jurisdiction, the receiving jurisdiction or

² See the Appendix for copy of the Acknowledgement.

subscribing LEAs should seek more information prior to making a credentialing or employment determination (see page 10). As the laws and regulations controlling professional discipline and licensing vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the existence of a record in the Clearinghouse alone is not grounds for reciprocal action.

Finally, NASDTEC maintains the Clearinghouse as a service to its members and does not audit, edit or otherwise alter the information submitted to the Clearinghouse. The accuracy of information reported to the Clearinghouse is the sole responsibility of the reporting member jurisdiction. Accordingly, NASDTEC does not represent or warrant that the information retrieved is current or free from inaccuracies, omissions or other defects and any such representations or warranties are expressly disclaimed.

NUTS AND BOLTS

The Clearinghouse is a searchable electronic database accessed through a secure portal via a unique log-on and password issued only to NASDTEC member jurisdictions and subscribing LEAs. The first obligation of LEA is to identify that the individual(s) responsible for accessing Clearinghouse data understand the Clearinghouse protocols. This Handbook and the accompanying video tutorial is designed to assist LEAs in training the appropriate staff. NASDTEC also recommends that each LEA creates written procedures implementing the NASDTEC protocols within the context of its unique requirements.

Definitions

The following definitions are by design general in nature, reflecting that the laws and regulations in each jurisdiction may vary significantly. The purpose of defining terms is to allow for a common lexicon; however, NASDTEC recognizes that the specific laws and regulations of any jurisdiction will control over these proposed definitions.

Action Types:

Denial – A reportable adverse action occurring when a jurisdiction declines to issue a certificate or license on grounds related to good moral character or other conduct that would lead to professional discipline had the applicant held certification. (NOTE: Denials based on program completion, competency testing, academic standing, etc., do not fall within the intended meaning of “for cause” and should not be reported.)

Revocation/Invalidation – Official agency action terminating or invalidating a certificate or license for actionable misconduct.

Not Available – Action type isn’t defined

Reinstatement – Official agency action that either lifts a suspension or removes a revocation/invalidation of an educator’s credentials.

Reproval/Reprimand – Final official agency action admonishing a certificate or license holder for actionable misconduct.

Surrender – Termination or invalidation of a certificate or license by consent that is recognized or confirmed as a final official agency action.

Suspension – Final official agency action terminating or invalidating a certificate or license for a time period or conditionally on the grounds of actionable misconduct.

General Terms:

Action or Nature of Action – Also known as Reportable Adverse Action. Refers to a denial of a certificate for cause or professional discipline that is a final official agency action against a certificate or license holder, which is public within the reporting jurisdiction.

Action Date or Date Action Taken – Date of official agency adverse action as defined by the respective jurisdiction.

Cert ID (Certification ID) – An identification number for an individual provided by a jurisdiction when reporting an action. Most jurisdictions report SSN in this field.

Criminal case status – If no criminal case exists related to the action, select Not Applicable. Otherwise, select the appropriate result/status of the criminal case.

Effective Date – Date the adverse action becomes effective, which may be the same as date action taken.

Jurisdiction – Education entity reporting the action.

License Type – A high-level classification of the nature of the license. License type is not required and is available to report for informational purposes only.

Profile ID – A unique number identifying an individual within the Clearinghouse. Note that it is possible that an individual has multiple profile IDs.

SSN/TID – The social security number, tax identification number or other government-issued identifier for an individual.

Year (Action Details) – The year in which the action was taken

Year of Birth/Date of Birth – The birth year or date of the individual against whom the action was taken.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) –refers to legally constituted entities within a Member Jurisdiction of NASDTEC for either administrative control or direction of, or to

perform a service function for, public or private elementary or secondary schools and with National Education Certification Organizations. (NOTE: NASDTEC may only enter into a license agreement for limited access to the Clearinghouse with such LEAs.)

NASDTEC Clearinghouse Administrator – refers to agency personnel within each jurisdiction who have editing permission.

Reportable adverse action – refers to professional discipline that is a final official agency action against a certificate or license holder, which is public within the reporting jurisdiction, including revocation/invalidation, suspension, reprimand/reproval, or surrender; the term also includes denials for cause and reinstatements.

Sexual misconduct – refers generally to any act (verbal, non-verbal, electronic, physical, etc.) directed towards a child or student that is designed to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the child or student; if a jurisdiction has specifically defined the term “sexual misconduct”, the specific definition should control for purposes of that jurisdiction’s submissions to the Clearinghouse.

Clearinghouse Point of Contact (POC)

Under the NASDTEC LEA Acknowledgement, each subscribing LEA is to designate a POC who manages the assigned username and password for the LEA and receives and responds to official communication from NASDTEC. The subscribing LEA should notify NASDTEC immediately of any changes in the POC.

Password Security

Subscribing LEAs may share the assigned username and password with office staff and third-party contractors who have responsibility for background checks and general processing of employment applications. At no time shall a person who is entrusted with Clearinghouse logon credentials access the Clearinghouse for any other purpose than to fulfill their assigned duties. NASDTEC maintains a security log that provides date and time each username logs into the system.

LEAs are encouraged to change their password on a regular basis.

Suggested Protocol for Use of the Clearinghouse

1. Restrict the access to the Clearinghouse.
Access to the Clearinghouse should be restricted to employees whose job includes the processing of employment applications and related human resource activities.
2. It is strongly recommended (but not required) that all staff who have access to the Clearinghouse also have accounts on the NASDTEC Online Community (OC).

In order to access the Clearinghouse your organization is required to be an Associate member of NASDTEC. Your organization may have up to 25 additional accounts attached to the organizational master membership at no additional cost. There are many benefits in having an account on the OC, the most important is that staff can stay current on announcements and updates that relate to the Clearinghouse and related professional practices activities.

In order to establish an account under the organization's master membership, go to www.nasdtec.net and click on "Register" in the right corner of the page. NASDTEC will review and approve the request.

3. Use the Clearinghouse look-up webpage as a step in the screening of all new hires.

The NASDTEC Clearinghouse should be used in the screening process of all new hires, not just seeking a position that requires a license or certificate. Those who have had adverse action taken against a license or certificate may not apply for a faculty or administrator position. The credentials to access the Clearinghouse may be shared with third-party organizations that assist in employment screening.

4. Use the REST API technology to connect the Clearinghouse with the LEAs human resources software to automate the process of identifying new and existing employees who may have had adverse action taken against a certificate or license.

Administrative hearings to decide on action against an educator's license or certificate can sometimes take several years. In the meantime, the educator may seek employment in another state, either in a faculty or non-faculty position. Once the final decision is made the state will enter the decision into the Clearinghouse database which will be in the next monthly FTP download, alerting the state certification office and the subscribing school district of the offense.

5. Notify the NASDTEC office when an error is found in a Clearinghouse record.

Accuracy is the goal in every record in the Clearinghouse database. Remember, however, that all the information is entered by hand and subject to human error. If you find an error in a record use the [NASDTEC contact form](#) to notify staff of the error. The NASDTEC support staff will make contact with the jurisdiction that entered the record to arrange for a correction.

6. Please take note that records submitted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) are different.

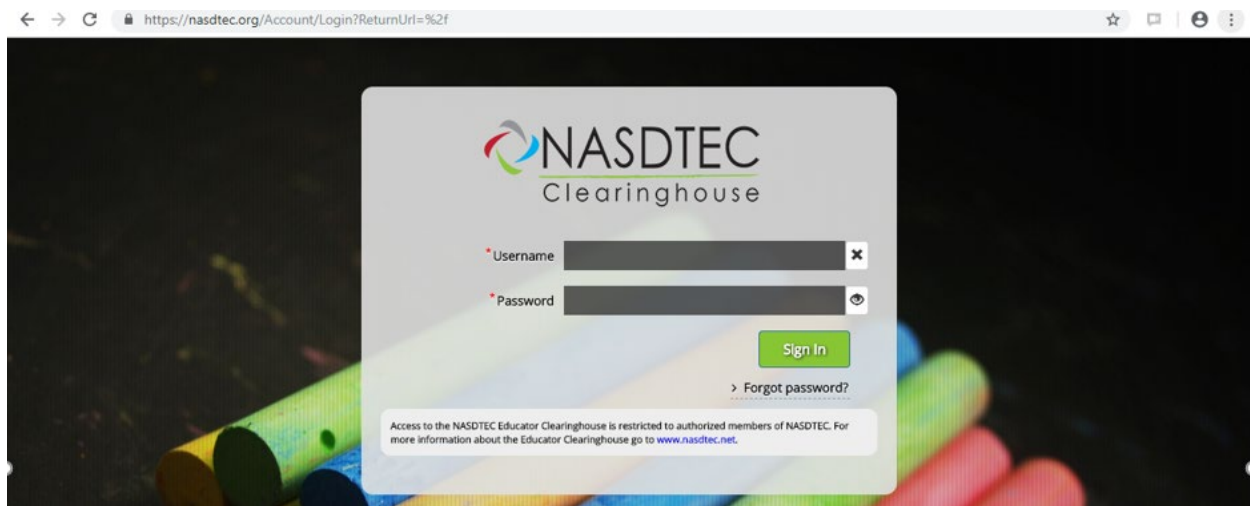
*With respect to California data, whether through individual searches or through a download of data, the LEA Clearinghouse **will not return** any part of the SSN (CERT_ID), DOB or Nature of Action for individual educators. LEAs will, however, be permitted to view the following fields upon securing a match with a California educator: first name, last name, action type, jurisdiction that entered the record, action date, effective date, and license type.*

NOTE: A short video is available for those who have received security credentials to access the LEA Clearinghouse. In order to be given access to the training video contact the Support Desk at support@nasdtec.org.

HOW TO'S

How to Login

1. Sign in to the secure portal at <https://www.nasdtec.org> with your login name and password:



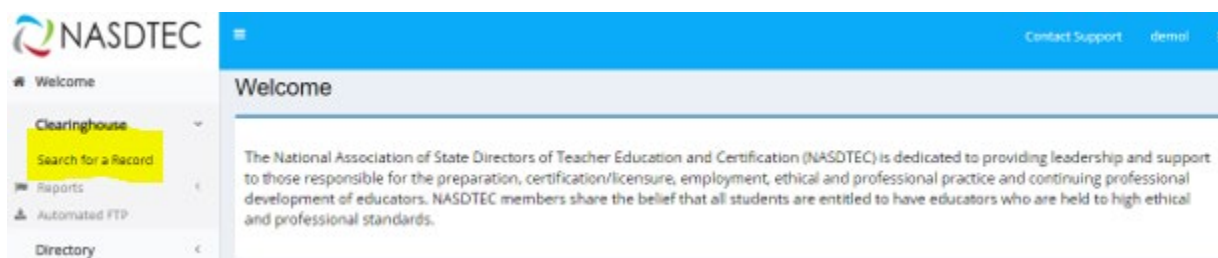
2. Each day you will be asked to confirm acceptance of the NASDTEC Clearinghouse Site Agreement:

NASDTEC Clearinghouse Site Agreement

- I have reviewed and understand the NASDTEC Educator Clearinghouse Manual.
- I affirm that I will use the information in the NASDTEC Clearinghouse only for official purposes related to my employment with the organization that holds the license agreement with NASDTEC.
- I understand that any misuse of this authority and responsibility may result in termination of my organization's access to the Clearinghouse.
- I understand that NASDTEC maintains the Clearinghouse as a service to its members and does not audit, edit or otherwise alter the information submitted to the Clearinghouse. The accuracy of information reported to the Clearinghouse is the sole responsibility of the reporting member jurisdiction.
- I understand that NASDTEC does not represent or warrant that the information retrieved is current or free from inaccuracies, omissions or other defects and any such representations or warranties are expressly disclaimed.
- I understand that Information submitted to the Clearinghouse concerning any individual is intended only to serve as an alert to other jurisdictions, authorized LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations and no action should be taken solely on the existence of a record in the Clearinghouse.

How to Search for a Record

1. Expand the "Clearinghouse" menu item in the left navigation column and select "Search for a Record."



2. Enter your search criteria in the appropriate search fields. The more fields you enter, the more narrow your results will be.

The screenshot shows the 'Search Clearinghouse' page. It includes a 'Discipline Action' section with a table of search results. The table has columns for Jurisdiction, SSN/TID - Last 4, Last Name, First Name, Middle Name, Maiden Name, YOB, and Action. A sample record is shown for 'IN' jurisdiction, SSN/TID '6789', Last Name 'Tester', First Name 'Test', YOB '1975', and Action 'Suspension'.

Jurisdiction ...	SSN/TID - Last 4	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Maiden Name	YOB	Action
IN	6789	Tester	Test			1975	Suspension

Note: Search results return as you type. If results aren't returning, click the blue refresh button directly above the "SSN/TID – Last 4" search field.

3. Click on the field within the action column to display action details in a pop-up window. *Note: You may need to allow pop-ups in your browser.*

Directory

Discipline Action Details

Certification ID	XXXXX6789	Jurisdiction	INDIANA
First Name	Test	License Type 1	Administrator
Last Name	Tester	License Type 2	
Middle Name/Initial		License Type 3	
Maiden Name		License Type 4	
Year of Birth	1975	Action Type	Suspension
Action Date	03/16/2019		
Effective Date	03/16/2019		
Transaction Date	03/16/2019		
Record Format	Version 2		
Link			

4. Next steps when you find a record.

Remember, a decision for employment should never be made just because a person has a record in the Clearinghouse.

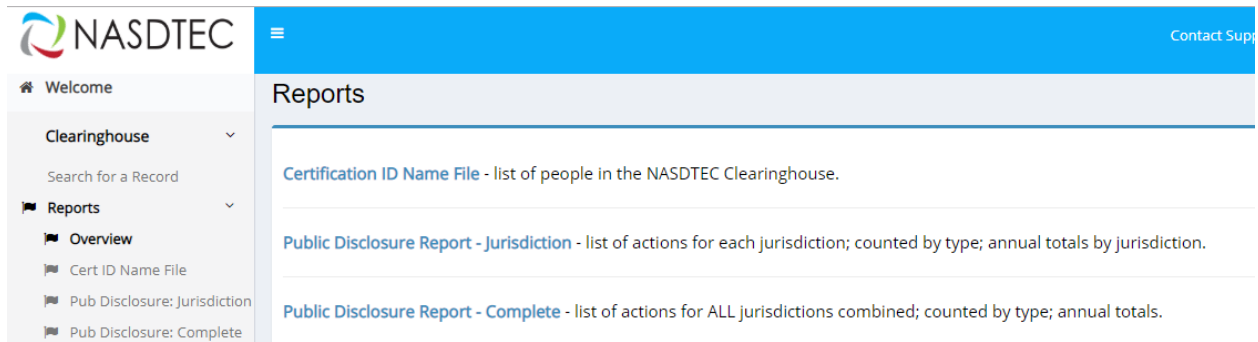
Information submitted to the Clearinghouse concerning any individual is intended only to serve as an alert to other jurisdictions, authorized LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations and no action should be taken solely on the existence of a record in the Clearinghouse.

Suggestions for follow-up:

- Check the Clearinghouse information against the person's criminal background check, professional references and employment application.
- Discuss the finding with the person and, if needed, ask for additional information.
- Search the person's name using the educator look-up resources on the NASDTEC Online Community. (You can find the look-up maps under the main menu at www.nasdtec.net : Resources > KnowledgeBase > Educator Lookup sites.
- Search the person's name on the internet. You often can find public records related to the NASDTEC record.
- Contact the district(s) where the person was previously employed.
- Contact the NASDTEC office in order to identify the Clearinghouse point of contact of the jurisdiction that submitted the record to the Clearinghouse. Click on the hyperlink to leave a message with the NASDTEC office.

How to Access Reports

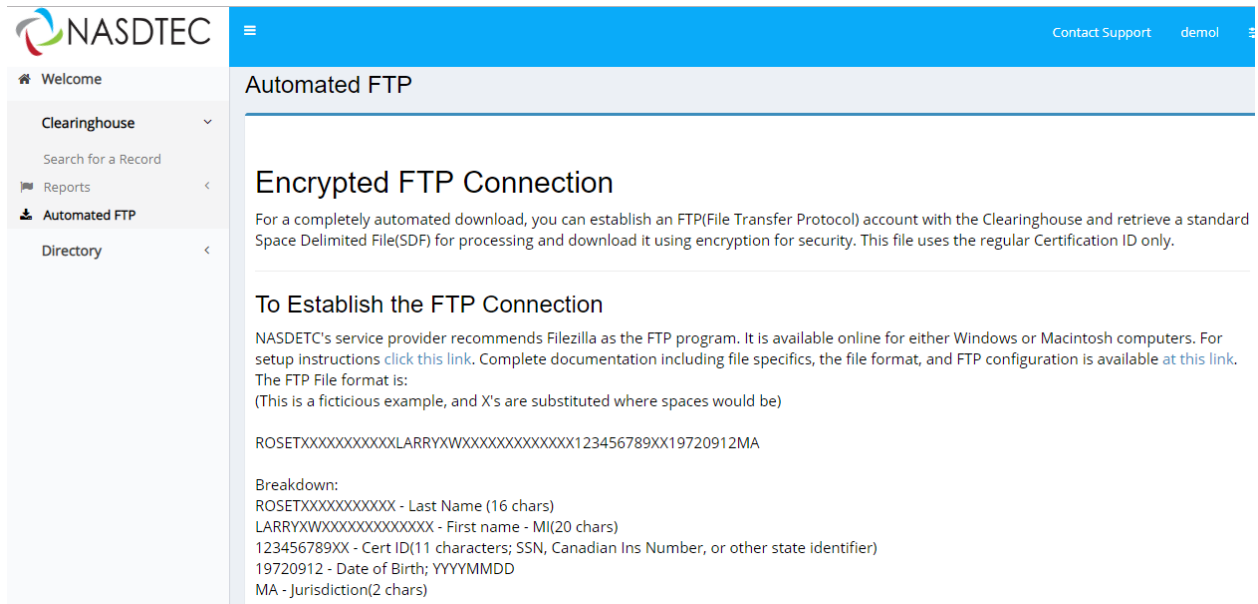
1. In addition to the ability to download search results as an Excel file under "Search for a Record," three reports are available to view and download as either Excel or PDF. To access reports, expand the "Clearinghouse" menu item in the left navigation column and select "Reports."
2. To see the following list of all reports available, with definitions of each report, click "Overview."



3. Most reports have at least one field that will allow you to narrow the results displayed.
4. Select a specific report to run. Within each report, use the Excel or PDF icons to download the currently displayed results.

How to Download Data via Automated FTP

1. Expand the "Clearinghouse" menu item in the left navigation column and select "Automated FTP" to view instructions for setting up automated FTP. Use of automate FTP is optional.



The screenshot shows the NASDTEC web application interface. The left navigation menu is expanded, showing the 'Automated FTP' option. The main content area is titled 'Automated FTP' and contains the following text:

Encrypted FTP Connection

For a completely automated download, you can establish an FTP(File Transfer Protocol) account with the Clearinghouse and retrieve a standard Space Delimited File(SDF) for processing and download it using encryption for security. This file uses the regular Certification ID only.

To Establish the FTP Connection

NASDTEC's service provider recommends Filezilla as the FTP program. It is available online for either Windows or Macintosh computers. For setup instructions [click this link](#). Complete documentation including file specifics, the file format, and FTP configuration is available [at this link](#).
The FTP File format is:
(This is a fictitious example, and X's are substituted where spaces would be)

```
ROSETXXXXXXXXXXLARRYWXXXXXXXXXXXX123456789XX19720912MA
```

Breakdown:
ROSETXXXXXXXXXX - Last Name (16 chars)
LARRYWXXXXXXXXXXXX - First name - MI(20 chars)
123456789XX - Cert ID(11 characters; SSN, Canadian Ins Number, or other state identifier)
19720912 - Date of Birth; YYYYMMDD
MA - Jurisdiction(2 chars)

APPENDIX A

LEA AND NATIONAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATIONS ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE NASDTEC EDUCATOR IDENTIFICATION CLEARINGHOUSE

WHEREAS, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), its Member Jurisdictions and authorized local educational agencies (LEA) and National Education Certification Organizations (collectively the “Parties”) share the belief that all students are entitled to have educators who are held to high ethical and professional standards; and

WHEREAS, the Parties recognize that in an increasingly mobile society, more educators are both pursuing certification/licensure in more than one state and seeking employment opportunities across state boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the Parties acknowledge that increased mobility presents additional challenges to ensuring the fitness of all educators; and

WHEREAS, NASDTEC’s Educator Identification Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) provides a cooperative mechanism for the exchange of names of educators whose certification/licensure have been adversely acted upon; and

WHEREAS, NASDTEC and the Parties recognize that participation in the Clearinghouse allows for the facilitation of educator mobility while providing an invaluable tool to alert Member Jurisdictions, LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations that an educator certificated/licensed or seeking to be certificated/licensed in their jurisdiction or seeking employment in an LEA or recognition by a National Certification Organization may have been the subject of public discipline in another jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations that wish to participate in the Clearinghouse under the NASDTEC Constitution and Bylaws assent to the terms and conditions delineated below and in the NASDTEC Clearinghouse Handbook and License Agreement by signature to this Acknowledgement.

Terms and Conditions:

The Clearinghouse Handbook is a detailed guide to effective and full participation in the Clearinghouse. It sets forth the obligations and rights of Member Jurisdictions and authorized LEA and National Education Certification Organization that elect to participate in the Clearinghouse. The terms and conditions set forth below reiterate some, but not all, of the terms and conditions found in the Handbook. This Acknowledgement incorporates

by reference all definitions, protocols and terms and conditions set forth in the Clearinghouse Handbook.

1. Member Jurisdiction Sovereignty

Participation in the Clearinghouse is not intended to alter, amend or regulate individual Member Jurisdiction's laws or regulations governing the certification, licensure and/or discipline of educators. Similarly, participation by authorized LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations is not intended to alter, amend or regulate employment policies or practices or any laws or rules regulating employment practices.

2. Intended Use of Clearinghouse Records

The Parties understand that the information submitted to the Clearinghouse concerning any individual is intended only to serve as an *alert* to other jurisdictions, authorized LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations and that no employment or certification action should be taken solely on the existence of a record in the Clearinghouse.

3. LEA and National Education Certification Organizations Access to Clearinghouse

NASDTEC may enter into a license agreement for access to the Clearinghouse with LEAs legally constituted within a Member Jurisdiction of NASDTEC for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public or private elementary or secondary schools and with National Education Certification Organizations, which are recognized by Member Jurisdictions as a bona fide certification granting organization either in a specific content area or based on national standards. LEAs' and National Education Certification Organizations' access to personal identifiable information will be limited to the last four digits of the CERT_ID and only the year of the date of birth. Authorized LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations will be subject to the same terms and conditions related to intended use of Clearinghouse records, Clearinghouse operations and training, Clearinghouse access and security and release of Clearinghouse records set forth in this Acknowledgement as well as other terms and conditions outlined in the Clearinghouse Handbook and the License Agreement.

4. Clearinghouse Operations and Training

- a. The Parties shall designate a person who shall be responsible for Clearinghouse operations and shall serve as the Clearinghouse point of contact.
- b. The Parties shall notify NASDTEC promptly when there is a change in the Clearinghouse point of contact.

- c. The Parties shall ensure that the Clearinghouse point of contact and all other pertinent personnel who have access to the Clearinghouse shall have read the Clearinghouse Manual and participated in any Clearinghouse training provided by NASDTEC.
 - d. Each authorized LEA and National Education Certification Organization shall be issued a unique username and password by NASDTEC and shall agree to only share the username and password with authorized staff.
 - e. The assigned password will be changed by NASDTEC every 12 months. The Clearinghouse point of contact will be notified of the new password. It will be the responsibility of the Clearinghouse point of contact to share the new password with authorized staff.
5. Timely Submission of Records
- a. Each Member Jurisdiction agrees to enter into the Clearinghouse the names of any individual whose certificates, licenses or similar credentials authorizing them to engage in providing educational services to students have been revoked, suspended, surrendered or otherwise adversely acted upon including public reprovals or reprimands and denials for cause.
 - b. Each authorized Member Jurisdiction agrees to use best efforts to enter the names of the individuals identified in subsection 6(a) above within 30 days of the effective date of the adverse action.
 - c. The Parties understand that the information provided to the Clearinghouse reflects final and public adverse actions in accordance with the laws and regulations of the submitting jurisdiction.
6. Editing and Deletion of Records
- Only Member Jurisdictions shall have editing privileges to correct typographical or incorrect entries or request deletion of records submitted in error or subsequently invalidated.
7. Release of Clearinghouse Records to Third-Parties
- In the event that laws and regulations related to freedom of information requests mandate release of Clearinghouse data that has been submitted by another jurisdiction, the Parties agree to redact prior to release all CERT_IDs and date of birth data except year of birth. The Parties also agree to notify NASDTEC immediately when a request for release of Clearinghouse records is received.
8. Best Practices for Cross-Referencing Alerts
- a. The purpose of cross-referencing the educator records in the Clearinghouse is two-fold: (i) a check for adverse actions against an individual who is applying for employment or national certification/licensure; and (ii) a notification of adverse action against all current employees and/or all certificate/license holders

- issued by an authorized National Education Certification Organization.
- b. The recommended protocol is that authorized LEAs and National Education Certification Organizations: (i) use the secure online lookup page during the initial hiring or certification process; (ii) use the secure FTP monthly download process to amass a table reflecting the total NASDTEC database, against which all current employees and applicants for employment can be cross-referenced.
 - c. NASDTEC also recommends that the match be made on both a perfect match (CERT_ID and DOB) where possible as well as a near match (i.e. CERT_ID or DOB and Name).
9. Data Validation
- a. Each Member Jurisdiction is requested to conduct an annual review to confirm the validity of the records submitted to the Clearinghouse.
 - b. The accuracy of information submitted to the Clearinghouse is the responsibility of the reporting member jurisdiction; however, neither the Member Jurisdictions nor NASDTEC represents or warrants that the information contained in the Clearinghouse is free from inaccuracies or omissions.