

Minnesota

1-A: Admission into Teacher Preparation

State Analysis

Minnesota does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit only candidates with strong academic backgrounds. The state does not require aspiring teachers to pass a test of academic proficiency, nor does the state require a minimum GPA for admission to teacher preparation programs. Rather, the basic skills assessment requirement is delayed until teacher candidates are ready to apply for licensure, provided they attempt the exam before admission.

Minnesota also allows teacher preparation programs to exempt candidates who demonstrate equivalent performance on a college entrance exam.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Rules 8710.0500 and 8700.7600

Minnesota Teacher Licensing Testing Information

http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&dDocName=052024&RevisionSelectionMethod=latestReleased&Rendition=primary

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

Require that teacher preparation programs screen candidates for academic proficiency prior to admission.

Teacher preparation programs that do not screen candidates invest considerable resources in individuals who may not be able to successfully complete the program and pass licensing tests. Candidates in need of additional support should complete remediation before entering the program to avoid the possibility of an unsuccessful investment of significant public tax dollars. Minnesota should require candidates to pass a test of academic proficiency that assesses reading, mathematics and writing prior to program admission. Alternatively, the state could require a minimum grade point average of at least 3.0 to establish that candidates have a strong academic history.

Require preparation programs to use a common test normed to the general college-bound population. Minnesota should require an assessment that demonstrates that candidates are academically competitive with all peers, regardless of their intended profession. Requiring a common test normed to the general college population would allow for the selection of applicants in the top half of their class, as well as facilitate program comparison.

Consider requiring candidates to pass subject-matter tests as a condition of admission into teacher programs. In addition to ensuring that programs require a measure of academic performance for admission, Minnesota might also want to consider requiring content testing prior to program admission as opposed to at the point of program completion. Program candidates are likely to have completed coursework that covers related test content in the prerequisite classes required for program admission. Thus, it would be sensible to have candidates take content tests while this knowledge is fresh rather than wait two years to fulfill the requirement, and candidates lacking sufficient expertise would be able to remedy deficits prior to entering formal preparation.

State Response

Minnesota stated that its preparation programs require that all candidates attempt the skills exam prior to entry into teacher preparation. Minnesota has a vested interest in seeing that candidates are allowed to pursue remediation during their undergraduate college studies. The state indicated that it has one of the worst achievement and opportunity gaps in the nation, and therefore having a strict policy of passing prior to entry would disproportionately disadvantage students of color. While the scores for the skills exam are received by the state at the point of licensure application, Minnesota noted that the majority of candidates do complete this requirement prior to entry into a prep program.

Minnesota reiterated that college entrance exams have been added to the options for verifying skills as well due to the fact that the state pays for all high school students to take the ACT exam. Therefore, the state noted, socioeconomic factors are lessened as a barrier to entering training for the profession. The state added that this is a common test normed to the general college bound population.

The state added that Minnesota institutions require a GPA of 2.5 or higher for entry into teacher preparation, and many require a GPA of 3.0. Many programs also have a 3.0-3.5 GPA requirement in place for exiting their programs.

1-B: Elementary Teacher Preparation

State Analysis

Minnesota offers an elementary license for grades K-6. Elementary teachers are required to pass each of the three subtests that comprise the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) Elementary Education test. The first subtest includes reading and communication arts; the second includes math and health/fitness and fine arts; and the third subtest includes science and social studies.

In addition, Minnesota does not require its elementary teacher candidates to earn an academic content specialization.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations
www.mtle.nesinc.com

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8700.7600 and 8710.3200

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Require all elementary teacher candidates to pass a subject-matter test designed to ensure sufficient content knowledge of all subjects.

Although Minnesota is on the right track by administering a three-part licensing test, thus making it harder for teachers to pass if they fail some subject areas, the state is encouraged to further strengthen its policy and require separate passing scores for each core subject on its Multiple Subjects test.

Require elementary teacher candidates to complete a content specialization in an academic subject area.

In addition to enhancing content knowledge, this requirement would ensure that prospective teachers in Minnesota take higher-level academic coursework. The requirement also provides an important safeguard in the event that candidates are unable to successfully complete clinical practice requirements. With an academic concentration (or better still a major or minor), candidates who are not ready for the classroom and do not pass student teaching can still be on track to complete a degree.

Provide broad liberal arts coursework relevant to the elementary classroom.

Although Minnesota outlines a more specific set of content standards than most states, the state should either articulate an even more detailed set of standards or establish more comprehensive coursework requirements that are specifically geared to the areas of knowledge needed by PreK-6 teachers. Further, the state should ensure that candidates will complete coursework relevant to the common topics in elementary grades. An adequate curriculum is likely to require approximately 36 credit hours in the core subject areas of English, science, social studies and fine arts.

Minnesota does not specify any coursework requirements for general education or elementary teacher candidates, but it does specify that those in teacher preparation programs must "complete

a program of general studies in the liberal arts and sciences equivalent to the requirement for persons enrolled in programs not preparing persons for teacher licensure," and that the "liberal arts curriculum of the institution incorporates multicultural and global perspectives."

In addition, Minnesota articulates standards that its approved teacher preparation programs must use to frame instruction in elementary content areas, including literature, science and health. However, these standards are too ambiguous and offer little guarantee that elementary teacher candidates will receive instruction in core topics like English literature, world history, or American history and government. Minnesota's MTLE content standards do articulate, for example, that elementary teachers must demonstrate knowledge of "children's and young adolescents' literature representing a range of genres, eras, perspectives, and cultures." The state also requires knowledge of "historical and modern perspectives" in both U.S. and world history.

State Response

Minnesota recognized the factual accuracy of this analysis.

1-C: Elementary Teacher Preparation in Reading Instruction

State Analysis

Minnesota requires that all new elementary teachers pass the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examination (MTLE) elementary education content test, which includes the equivalent of a stand alone science of reading assessment.

In its standards for elementary and special education teacher preparation, Minnesota also requires teacher preparation programs to address the science of reading.

Elementary teacher candidates must be prepared for the key instructional shifts related to literacy that differentiate college- and career-readiness standards from their predecessors. The testing standards for the reading subtest of the MTLE incorporate the instructional shifts in the use of text associated with college- and career-readiness standards for students and require the following:

- Must be able to demonstrate knowledge of various types of informational/expository texts, including key textual features (e.g., indexes and headings), graphic features (e.g., charts and diagrams) and organizational structures (e.g., descriptive, chronological, cause/effect, comparison/contrast, problem/solution) of these texts and applying knowledge of explicit instruction in key features and organizational structures of various print and digital informational/expository texts to promote students' understanding of these texts
- Must be able to apply knowledge of explicit instruction in analysis and response skills for informational/expository texts (e.g., analyzing an author's point of view or argument,

- evaluating a text with respect to credibility, analyzing a text's internal consistency or logic, paraphrasing information from a text, summarizing a text's main ideas)
- Must be able to demonstrate knowledge of formal and informal methods for assessing students' understanding and analysis of and response to literary/narrative and informational/expository texts and to demonstrate the ability to interpret and use the results of these assessments to plan effective instruction in literary response and analysis and content-area literacy skills.

The social studies subarea requires elementary teachers to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of sources of information used in social studies and their ethical use (e.g., primary sources, Internet, copyright, source citations)
- Recognize stages in the inquiry process (e.g., developing the essential question; forming a hypothesis; finding, collecting and organizing historical research)
- Apply knowledge of the use of tools of inquiry and problem solving (e.g., graphs, maps, time lines).

Minnesota's test competencies address struggling readers, and the state's standards for elementary teachers require that they have the "formal and informal tools to...design and implement appropriate classroom interventions for struggling readers."

State Analysis Citation

MTLE Test Requirements
www.mtle.nesinc.com

Minnesota Statutes 122A.06 and 122A.18

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.3200

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that the science of reading test is meaningful.

To ensure that its science of reading test is meaningful, Minnesota should evaluate its passing score to make certain it reflects a high standard of performance.

Ensure that new elementary teachers are prepared to incorporate informational text of increasing complexity into classroom instruction.

Minnesota's testing frameworks are commendable. The state is encouraged to strengthen its existing policy and explicitly require that teachers possess the ability to adequately incorporate complex informational text into classroom instruction.

Ensure that new elementary teachers are prepared to incorporate literacy skills as an integral part of every subject.

To ensure that elementary students are capable of accessing varied information about the world around them, Minnesota should also—either through testing frameworks or teacher standards—include literacy skills and using text to build content knowledge in history/social studies, science, technical subjects and the arts.

State Response

Minnesota recognized the factual accuracy of this analysis.

1-D: Elementary Teacher Preparation in Mathematics

State Analysis

Minnesota requires all elementary teacher candidates to pass the MTLE elementary content test which includes a separately scored subtest in which mathematics accounts for 75 percent of the exam questions. Teacher candidates must pass each subtest to earn a passing score on the overall assessment. Although not quite a stand alone test, the high concentration of mathematics question makes it unlikely that candidates can pass with insufficient math knowledge, provided the passing score is set with appropriate rigor.

State Analysis Citation

MTLE Test Requirement
www.mtle.nesinc.com

State Goal Score

Minnesota nearly meets this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that the elementary math test is rigorous and specifically focuses on the knowledge and skills that elementary teachers need.

Minnesota should ensure that its mathematics assessment evaluates candidates' knowledge beyond an elementary school level, challenges their understanding of underlying concepts and requires candidates to apply knowledge in nonroutine, multistep procedures. Teacher candidates who lack minimum mathematics knowledge should not be eligible for licensure.

State Response

Minnesota indicated that the Minnesota Basic Skills exam also has a stand alone math exam that is set at the level of college experience. In addition, the state noted, the Board of Teaching has received significant criticism regarding the rigor of the exam, as it is not seen as "Basic." Its level of rigor has proven to be a challenge for many elementary licensure candidates trained and licensed in other states.

Minnesota further asserted that when combined with the elementary content exam, the state requires a very high level of content knowledge for all licensed teachers.

State Response Citation

https://www.mtle.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/MN054_SG.html

1-E: Early Childhood

State Analysis

Minnesota only requires its early childhood education teacher candidates, who are licensed to teach through grade 3, to pass the MTLE Early Childhood Education test, which not only combines content with a pedagogy assessment but also does not report teacher performance in each subject area, meaning that it is possible to pass the test and still fail some subject areas. The test does, however, contain the equivalent of a standalone test that addresses the science of reading.

The Early Childhood test also includes some of the instructional shifts toward building content knowledge and vocabulary through increasingly complex informational texts and careful reading of informational and literary texts associated with the state's college- and career-readiness standards for students.

The Early Childhood Education test requires the following:

- Recognize key features of different types of informational texts and apply knowledge of the use of appropriate texts and effective, engaging oral language, reading, and writing activities to promote students' emerging capacity to comprehend informational texts and read for different purposes
- Demonstrate knowledge of formal and informal methods for assessing students' understanding and analysis of literary and informational texts and knowledge of how to interpret and use the results of such assessments to plan effective instruction in literary response and analysis and content-area literacy skills.

Neither teacher standards nor testing requirements address incorporating literacy into all academic subjects or the needs of struggling readers.

State Analysis Citation

MTLE

www.mtle.nesinc.com

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.3000; 8700.7600

Minnesota Statutes 122A.06 and 122A.18

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Require early childhood teacher candidates to pass a subject-matter test designed to ensure sufficient content knowledge of all subjects.

Minnesota should require a rigorous content test as a condition of certification that includes separate, meaningful passing scores for each core subject area on the test. Use of a composite passing score offers no assurance of adequate knowledge in each subject area. A candidate may achieve a passing score and still be seriously deficient in a particular subject area.

Ensure that early childhood teachers are prepared to meet the instructional requirements of college- and career-readiness standards for students.

Incorporate informational text of increasing complexity into classroom instruction. Minnesota's testing frameworks are commendable. The state is encouraged to strengthen its existing policy and explicitly require that all candidates who teach elementary grades possess the ability to adequately incorporate complex informational text into classroom instruction.

Incorporate literacy skills as an integral part of every subject. To ensure that elementary students are capable of accessing varied information about the world around them, Minnesota should also—either through testing frameworks or teacher standards—include literacy skills and using text to build content knowledge in history/social studies, science, technical subjects and the arts.

Support struggling readers. Minnesota should articulate more specific requirements that ensuring all candidates who teach elementary grades are prepared to intervene and support students who are struggling. The early elementary grades are an especially important time to address reading deficiencies before students fall behind.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts necessary for this analysis.

In addition, Minnesota asserted that candidates for Early Childhood Education Licensure must complete exams in Early Childhood Education Pedagogy or Elementary Level Pedagogy, as well as the Early Childhood Content Exam. The Early Childhood Content Exam does include specific objectives (including content area reading) for math, science, social studies, language and literacy. The state added that the Basic Skills exam measures reading, writing and mathematics skills at the level of college experience.

State Response Citation

MTLE Early Childhood Education test

http://www.mtle.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/MN020_SG.html

http://www.mtle.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/MN001_SG.html

1-F: Middle School Teacher Preparation

State Analysis

Although Minnesota's elementary license is typically valid for grades K-6, teacher candidates may teach grades 7 and 8 if they are in self-contained classrooms. Teachers with secondary certificates may teach grades 7 and 8 in those subjects for which valid licensure is held.

Minnesota also offers the following middle-level endorsements to teach grades 5-8 for: communication arts and literature, mathematics, social studies and general science. Candidates must complete the equivalent of a minor in each subject area of licensure.

All new teachers in Minnesota are also required to pass the Minnesota subject-matter test to attain licensure. However, only secondary and middle-level candidates are required to pass single-subject content tests to attain licensure. Those seeking the elementary license are only required to pass the general content test for elementary education, in which subscores are not provided; therefore, there is no assurance that these middle school teachers will have sufficient knowledge about each subject they teach.

The MTLE Middle Level Communication Arts/Literature assessment includes some of the instructional shifts toward building content knowledge and vocabulary through careful reading of informational and literary texts associated with college- and career-readiness standards for students.

MTLE middle school tests in other content areas address literacy skills. The Middle Level Social Studies test requires teachers to "understand the content and methods for developing students' content-area reading skills to support their reading and learning in the social studies." Similar requirements are also outlined in the state's science assessment.

Regarding struggling readers, the Middle Level Communication Arts/Literature assessment requires the following:

- Ability to differentiate reading instruction and materials selection to meet the needs of students at various reading proficiency levels and with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- Ability to scaffold reading tasks for students who experience comprehension difficulties.

In addition, Minnesota's teacher preparation standards require "Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction [that] also includes and integrates instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluating, and communicating the student's reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text, write, and apply higher level thinking skills."

State Analysis Citation

Test Requirement

www.mtle.nesinc.com

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.0300, Subpart 8 and 8710.3310, .3320, .3330, .3340

Minnesota Statutes 122A.06 and 122A.18

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Require content testing in all core areas.

Minnesota should require subject-matter testing for all middle school teacher candidates in every core academic area they intend to teach as a condition of initial licensure. To ensure meaningful middle school content tests, the state should set its passing scores to reflect high levels of performance.

Prepare middle school teachers to teach middle school.

Minnesota should not allow middle school teachers to teach on a generalist license that does not differentiate between the preparation of middle school teachers and that of elementary teachers. These teachers are less likely to be adequately prepared to teach core academic areas at the middle school level because their preparation requirements are not specific to the middle or secondary levels, and they need not pass a subject-matter test in each subject they teach. Minnesota should ensure that students in grades 7 and 8 have teachers who are appropriately prepared to teach grade-level content, which is different and more advanced than what elementary teachers teach.

Strengthen middle school teachers' subject-matter preparation.

Minnesota should encourage middle school teachers who plan to teach multiple subjects to earn two minors in two core academic areas. Middle school candidates who intend to teach a single subject should earn a major in that area.

Ensure that middle school teachers are prepared to meet the instructional requirements of college- and career-readiness standards for students.

Incorporate informational text of increasing complexity into classroom instruction.

Although Minnesota's testing framework is commendable, the state should strengthen its policy and ensure that teachers are able to challenge students with texts of increasing complexity.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.

Minnesota also stated that subscores on the elementary content exam are available to determine subject-area performance of a K-6 licensed teacher who may be teaching in a self-contained classroom. According to the state, a very small percentage of classrooms exist within the self-contained structure today meaning that the vast majority of middle-level teachers hold middle-level licensure specific to their content area with middle-level specific pedagogy training.

1-G: Secondary Teacher Preparation

State Analysis

Minnesota offers single-subject secondary licenses to teach mathematics, communication arts and social studies 5-12 or science fields 9-12. The state requires that its secondary teacher candidates pass a content test to teach any core secondary subjects. To add an additional field to a secondary license, teachers must also pass a content test.

Minnesota requires that secondary English teachers pass the MTLE Communication Arts/Literature assessment, which includes the instructional shifts toward building content knowledge and vocabulary through careful reading of informational and literary texts associated with college- and career-readiness standards for students.

Minnesota also addresses literacy in other content-area tests. For example, its life science assessment requires teachers to "understand the content and methods for developing students' content-area reading skills to support their reading and learning in life science." Similar requirements are also articulated in the frameworks for the chemistry and social studies tests.

Further, Minnesota's standards require all teacher preparation programs to include "research-based best practices in reading ... that enable the licensure candidates to know how to teach reading in the candidate's content areas."

Regarding struggling readers, the framework for the MTLE Communication Arts/Literature assessment requires teachers to "understand the foundations of reading development," which includes the following:

- Demonstrating the ability to differentiate reading instruction to meet the needs of students at various reading proficiency levels and with various linguistic backgrounds

- Demonstrating the ability to scaffold reading tasks for students who experience comprehension difficulties.

In addition, Minnesota's teacher preparation standards require "Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction [that] also includes and integrates instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluating, and communicating the student's reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text, write, and apply higher level thinking skills."

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations
www.mtle.nesinc.com

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.0500, -4800

Minnesota Statutes 122A.18

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that secondary teachers are prepared to meet the instructional requirements of college- and career-readiness standards for students.

Incorporate informational text of increasing complexity into classroom instruction. Although Minnesota's required secondary English language arts content test addresses informational texts, the state should strengthen its policy and ensure that teachers are able to challenge students with texts of increasing complexity.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.

1-H: Secondary Teacher Preparation in Science and Social Studies

State Analysis

Minnesota does not offer certification in general science for secondary teachers.

The state allows a general social studies license, and candidates are required to pass the MTLE Social Studies test, which is comprised of two subtests. The first subtest combines social studies skills, world history, and U.S. and Minnesota history. The second combines geography, government and citizenship, economics and behavioral sciences. Candidates must pass each subtest to pass the test.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations
www.mtle.nesinc.com

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.4770

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal.

Recommendations

As a result of Minnesota's strong secondary teacher preparation policies in science and social studies, no recommendations are provided.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.

1-I: Special Education Teacher Preparation

State Analysis

Minnesota offers a K-12 special education certification, as well as special education certification for birth through grade 1.

The state does not require content testing for any of its special education teacher candidates.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Rule 8710.5500

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

End licensure practices that fail to distinguish between the skills and knowledge needed to teach elementary grades and secondary grades.

It is virtually impossible and certainly impractical for Minnesota to ensure that a K-12 special education teacher knows all the subject matter he or she is expected to be able to teach, especially considering state and federal expectations that special education students should meet the same high standards as other students. While the broad K-12 umbrella may be appropriate for teachers of low-incidence special education students, such as those with severe cognitive disabilities, it is deeply problematic for the overwhelming majority of high-incidence special education students, who are expected to learn grade-level content.

Require that elementary special education candidates pass a rigorous content test as a condition of initial licensure.

To ensure that special education teacher candidates who will teach elementary grades possess sufficient knowledge of the subject matter at hand, Minnesota should require a rigorous content

test that reports separate passing scores for each content area. Minnesota should also set these passing scores to reflect high levels of performance. Failure to ensure that teachers possess requisite content knowledge deprives special education students of the opportunity to reach their academic potential.

Ensure that secondary special education teachers possess adequate content knowledge. Secondary special education teachers are frequently generalists who teach many core subject areas. While it may be unreasonable to expect secondary special education teachers to meet the same requirements for each subject they teach, as do other teachers who teach only one subject, Minnesota's current policy of requiring no subject-matter testing is problematic and will not help special education students to meet rigorous learning standards. To provide a middle ground, Minnesota should consider a customized HOUSSE route for new secondary special education teachers and look to the flexibility offered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which allows for a combination of testing and coursework to demonstrate requisite content knowledge in the classroom.

State Response

Minnesota indicated that special education teachers are not the teacher of record for content subjects for special education students. Therefore, a properly licensed content teacher is teaching the student math competencies in collaboration with the special education teacher who is a facilitator of that content learning and makes accommodations for the special education learner based on his or her IEP/needs. The state indicated that the special education teacher does not need to have content expertise in every subject area; rather, the teacher needs skills in accommodating for the learning disabilities or for the physical or behavioral needs of the special education student. Minnesota added that most of its schools have inclusive placements for SPED students within the general education classrooms.

Minnesota also stated that special education programs are required to provide experience and training across both elementary and secondary settings in preparation for earning any K-12 license. This change has taken place in support of providing deep training and experience for teachers, as special education fields are all shortage areas in Minnesota.

The state added that the Minnesota Basic Skills exam is set at the level of college experience in the areas of Reading, Writing and Math. The state's Board of Teaching has received significant criticism regarding the rigor of the exam, as it is not seen as "Basic." Its level of rigor has proven to be a challenge for many licensure candidates trained in Minnesota and licensed in other states.

State Response Citation

MN Rule 8710.5000

https://www.mtle.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/MN054_SG.html

Last Word

While special educators should be valued for their critical role in working with students with disabilities and special needs, they are identified by the state as "special education teachers," presumably because the state expects them to provide instruction to children. Providing instruction to children who have special needs requires both knowledge of effective learning strategies and some knowledge of the subject matter at hand. Failure to ensure that teachers are well trained in content areas deprives special education students of the opportunity to reach their full academic potential.

NCTQ recognizes that the state has received considerable pushback related to its basic skills exam. But the issue here is content testing, and the state sends a worrisome message by setting a lower bar for special education teachers.

1-J: Special Education Preparation in Reading

State Analysis

Although subtest I of the MTLE Special Education Core Skills test contains a section addressing scientifically based reading instruction, it only accounts for 30 percent of the score and therefore cannot be considered a stand alone reading test. However, Minnesota's preparation standards require special education candidates to be able to demonstrate knowledge of the principles of scientifically based reading instruction.

The Special Education Core Skills test addresses the use of informational texts by requiring teachers to be able to apply "knowledge of research-based, explicit instruction in print and digital informational/expository texts, and response and analysis skills for informational/expository texts (e.g., analyzing a text's internal consistency or logic, summarizing a text's main ideas)." Teacher preparation standards require special education candidates to be able to possess the "knowledge of reading comprehension processes necessary to comprehend different types of informational materials and content-area texts; and the structures and features of expository (informational) texts and effective reading strategies to address different text structures and purposes for reading."

Neither licensing tests nor teacher preparation standards address the incorporation of literacy skills in the core content areas.

With regard to struggling readers, the reading instruction portion of the state's licensing test requires teachers to be able to apply "knowledge of strategies (e.g., differentiated instruction, interventions) for addressing the assessed needs of individual students in vocabulary, academic language, comprehension and comprehension strategies." In addition, Minnesota's teacher preparation standards require "Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction [that] also

includes and integrates instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluating, and communicating the student's reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text, write, and apply higher level thinking skills, as well as ensuring that special education teachers have the "formal and informal tools to...design and implement appropriate classroom interventions for struggling readers."

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statutes 122A.18

Minnesota Rule 8710.2000; 3200; 5000 and 5500

Special Education Test Requirement

http://www.mtle.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/MN186_SG_SUB2.html

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Require all special education teacher candidates who teach elementary grades to pass a rigorous assessment in the science of reading instruction.

Minnesota should require a rigorous reading assessment tool to ensure that its elementary special education teacher candidates are adequately prepared in the science of reading instruction before entering the classroom. The state's MTLE elementary education test required of general education teachers includes the equivalent of a standalone science of reading assessment. Minnesota should, therefore, expand its existing policy and require all special education teachers who teach the elementary grades to pass this assessment as well. It is especially critical that these teacher candidates possess the knowledge and skills related to the science of reading and pass a rigorous test that addresses all five instructional components of scientifically based reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Elementary special education teachers who do not possess the minimum knowledge in this area should not be eligible for licensure.

Ensure that new special education teachers are prepared to incorporate informational text of increasing complexity into classroom instruction.

Either through testing frameworks or teacher standards, Minnesota should more specifically address the instructional shifts toward building content knowledge and vocabulary through increasingly complex informational texts and careful reading of informational and literary texts associated with college- and career-readiness standards for students. Minnesota already has in place commendable testing frameworks for its general education elementary

teachers. The state is encouraged to require similar frameworks for its special education teachers, thereby ensuring knowledge of these instructional shifts.

Ensure that new special education teachers are prepared to incorporate literacy skills as an integral part of every subject.

To ensure that special education students are capable of accessing varied information about the world around them, Minnesota should include more specific requirements regarding literacy skills and using text as a means to build content knowledge in history/social studies, science, technical subjects and the arts.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts necessary for this analysis.

1-K: Assessing Professional Knowledge

State Analysis

Minnesota requires all teachers to pass a pedagogy exam under the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) in order to attain licensure.

State Analysis Citation

<http://www.mtle.nesinc.com/Home.aspx>

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal.

Recommendations

As a result of Minnesota's strong policies for assessing professional knowledge, no recommendations are provided.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.

1-L: Student Teaching

State Analysis

Minnesota requires candidates to complete at least 12 full weeks of student teaching. However, the state does not address the qualifications of cooperating teachers.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8705 (Effective January 1, 2016)

Revised Rule:

<http://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/board-operations/initiatives/index.jsp>

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Ensure that cooperating teachers have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness as measured by student learning.

In addition to the ability to mentor an adult, cooperating teachers in Minnesota should also be carefully screened for their capacity to further student achievement. Research indicates that the only aspect of a student teaching arrangement that has been shown to have an impact on student achievement is the positive effect of selection of the cooperating teacher by the preparation program, rather than by the student teacher or school district staff.

Use evidence from the state's teacher evaluation system to select cooperating teachers.

Minnesota requires objective measures of student growth to be a significant criterion of its teacher evaluations. The state should therefore utilize its evaluation results, which provide evidence of effectiveness in the classroom, in the selection of effective cooperating teachers.

Explicitly require that student teaching be completed locally, thus prohibiting candidates from completing this requirement abroad.

Unless preparation programs can establish true satellite campuses to closely supervise student teaching arrangements, placement in foreign or otherwise novel locales should be supplementary to a standard student teaching arrangement. Outsourcing the arrangements for student teaching makes it impossible to ensure the selection of the best cooperating teacher and adequate supervision of the student teacher and may prevent training of the teacher on relevant state instructional frameworks.

State Response

Minnesota's Board of Teaching asserted that while there is not an explicit policy requirement to tie the state's teacher evaluation system and cooperating teacher selection, the E-12 Education Omnibus bill passed in 2015 provides for identification of those on improvement plans and reporting the information to the Board of Teaching on an annual basis. In addition, MN Rule 8705.1000 which becomes effective January 1, 2016 provides that there is "an established process and criteria for the selection of school-based partner sites and cooperating teachers to assure that partners model effective instructional practices, and that the cooperating teachers model the incorporation of state prekindergarten through grade 12 student academic standards in their teaching."

State Response Citation

E-12 Education Omnibus
MN Rule 8705.1000

1-M: Teacher Preparation Program Accountability

State Analysis

Minnesota's approval process for its traditional and alternate route teacher preparation programs could do more to hold programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce.

All preparation programs, including alternate route programs, produce a biannual report that must include pass rates on pedagogy and content exams, as well as the edTPA for accountability purposes. Candidates must be measured in three areas: planning for instruction and assessment, engaging students and supporting learning and assessing student learning.

In addition, Minnesota passed legislation in 2015 that requires each institution to submit an annual, publicly accessible report on its teacher preparation programs. Report cards must include the summative evaluation rating for all teachers who finished their probationary period and accepted a continuing contract position with the district. The annual report must also include a number of other measures, including but not limited to the licensure areas for probationary teachers whose contracts were not renewed or who were released by a district, the percentage of program completers who were hired to teach full time in their licensure field, students' pass rates on skills and subject-matter exams and satisfaction levels of program completers and school principals or supervising teachers. Unfortunately, these annual reports have not yet been funded. As of now, the state is working to determine how to meet this demand for information.

Minnesota does not, however, apply any transparent, measurable criteria for conferring program approval. Further, in the past three years, no programs in Minnesota have been identified as low performing.

Minnesota maintains control over its approval process.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Rule 8700.7600 2015 Omnibus Bill, Article 1, Sec. 10, Subd. 4a. (a) & (b)

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Collect data that connect student achievement gains to teacher preparation programs.

While Minnesota requires programs to report the summative evaluation rating for all teachers who finished their probationary period and accepted a continuing contract position with the district, this provides a rather narrow slice of teacher effectiveness data as it reflects only one subset of teachers at one point in time. Minnesota should consider expanding its efforts to connect student achievement gains to teacher preparation programs. As one way to measure

whether programs are producing effective classroom teachers, Minnesota should consider the academic achievement gains of students taught by programs' graduates, averaged over the first three years of teaching. Data that are aggregated to the institution (e.g., combining elementary and secondary programs) rather than disaggregated to the specific preparation program are not useful for accountability purposes. Such aggregation can mask significant differences in performance among programs.

Establish the minimum standard of performance for each category of data.

Merely collecting data is insufficient for accountability purposes. The next and perhaps more critical step is for Minnesota to establish precise minimum standards for teacher preparation program performance for each category of data. Programs should be held accountable for meeting rigorous standards, and there should be consequences for failing to do so, including loss of program approval. Although Minnesota now requires programs to report a variety of data, without standards for performance, it lacks any usefulness for accountability purposes.

Prioritize funding for program accountability system.

NCTQ points out that this *Yearbook* is based on the existence of regulations, not on the implementation of them. Although Minnesota's new legislation includes important elements of an accountability system for teacher preparation programs, it also appears that funding has not been provided to implement these requirements. NCTQ encourages the state to prioritize funding for program accountability.

State Response

Minnesota noted that any pass rates on exams below 80 percent or edTPA pass rates below 70 percent flag the program for additional review by a program review panel, requiring a deeper explanation of program performance by the institution or organization. Rules supporting have been informally in place since 2013 and 2014, respectively, but neither has been codified in Rule. The state expects that to happen shortly, when this process become effective January 1, 2016.

The state added that while it does not rate its programs as low performing, there have been a number of programs discontinued or institutions moved to "conditional approval" status with improvement measures identified. The 2015 Omnibus bill will now require the Board of Teaching as well as the Board of School administrators to provide report cards on programs.

The state indicated that evaluation of candidate performance in student teaching is built into the identified assessments of each program, required across all approved providers. An annual technical report providing testing pass rates is available on the Board of Teaching website.

State Response Citation

Educator Preparation Program Application System

<http://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/preparing-teachers/program-approval/index/>

2015 Omnibus bill

MTLE Technical Reports

<http://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/board-operations/reports/>

2-A: Alternate Route Eligibility

State Analysis

Minnesota requires candidates for alternate routes to have a minimum GPA of 3.0. Waivers for this requirement may be granted for candidates meeting specific criteria that have not yet been determined.

In addition, Minnesota now requires that all alternate route candidates pass a content-area and a pedagogy examination prior to admission. Candidates must also pass a test of basic skills, but starting in 2015, the state also accepts passing scores on the ACT Plus Writing or SAT exams in place of a basic skills exam.

Neither a major nor specific coursework is required; as a result there is no need for a test-out option.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statutes 122A.245

Minnesota Teacher Licensure Testing Information

http://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/assets/Licensure%20Testing%202015_tcm25-26252.pdf

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that pending waivers for minimum GPA requirements are appropriate.

Waiver criteria should offer accommodation to career changers with relevant work experience. Alternatively, the state could require one of the standardized tests of academic proficiency commonly used in higher education for graduate admissions, such as the GRE.

Eliminate basic skills test requirement.

Minnesota is commended for requiring all applicants to demonstrate content knowledge on a

subject-matter test. However, the state's requirement that alternate route candidates pass a basic skills test is impractical and ineffectual. Basic skills tests measure minimum competency—essentially those skills that a person should have acquired in middle school—and are inappropriate for candidates who have already earned a bachelor's degree. A test designed for individuals who already have a bachelor's degree, such as the GRE, would be a much more appropriate measure of academic standing. Minnesota is commended for accepting passing ACT or SAT score as a substitute for the basic skills test requirement.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis. The state commented that the skills test in Minnesota is not reflective of middle level skills competency and is developed at the level of “college experience.”

2-B: Alternate Route Preparation

State Analysis

Minnesota requires that alternate route programs provide a minimum of 200 instructional hours to candidates before they can assume classroom responsibilities. The state provides no specific guidelines about the nature of the coursework for its alternate route except to say that it should be research-based and focused on best practices. There is also no limit on the overall amount of coursework, nor on the amount of coursework a candidate can be required to take while also teaching.

The state requires alternate route programs in partnership with districts to provide "intensive, ongoing, and multiyear mentoring and induction support for new teachers," but no further details or definitions are articulated.

Candidates are issued a two-year limited term license while completing the alternate route program. In some cases the state will renew this limited license one additional time for a one-year term. Upon completion, alternate route candidates may be recommended for the standard teaching certificate.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statutes 122A.245

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Establish coursework guidelines for alternate route preparation programs.

Simply mandating coursework without specifying the purpose can inadvertently send the wrong

message to program providers—that "anything goes" as long as credits are granted. However constructive, any course that is not fundamentally practical and immediately necessary should be eliminated as a requirement. Appropriate coursework should include grade-level or subject-level seminars, methodology in the content area, classroom management, assessment and scientifically based early reading instruction.

Ensure that new teachers are not burdened by excessive requirements.

While requiring some preparation prior to entering the classroom is important, Minnesota requires alternate route candidates to take a considerable amount of coursework before they begin teaching, an amount more typically associated with a traditional preparation program. All coursework requirements should be manageable for career changers and other nontraditional candidates and should contribute to the immediate needs of new teachers.

Offer opportunities to practice teach.

While Minnesota is commended for offering high-quality mentoring support to new alternate route teachers, the state may want to consider providing its candidates with a practice-teaching opportunity prior to their placement in the classroom.

State Response

Minnesota asserted that it is a standards-based state, and the standards required for all programs are required for alternative programs, but the state will not prescribe the courses that need to be part of the preparation program. Therefore, "anything goes" isn't a reality. Rather, the standards must be evidenced as being taught and assessed in the program or it won't be approved.

The state additionally commented that it does not mandate the number of courses a program requires, rather, the developers of the program determine how to deliver the standards and provide evidence of that being accomplished, which is the basis for approval.

Lastly, the state indicated that as part of the alternative program application, the providers must articulate their plan for induction/mentorship, and that plan is evaluated as part of the review of the proposed program application. This flexibility allows for a variety of alternative program types, rather than a "cookie cutter" design for mentorship.

2-C: Alternate Route Usage and Providers

State Analysis

Minnesota is commended for having no restrictions on the usage of its alternate route with regard to subject, grade or geographic area.

Although school districts, charter schools and nonprofit providers may create and implement an alternative teacher preparation program, there is little to no diversity in the providers actually

offering preparation programs in Minnesota. The state's current teacher preparation program providers are overwhelmingly institutions of higher education.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statutes 122A.245

Teacher Preparation Institutions by Regional Service Cooperative Districts, September 2015
http://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/assets/Teacherprep%20by%20regional%20service%20coop%20districts%20Jan%202015_tcm25-62822.pdf

State Goal Score

Minnesota nearly meets this goal.

Recommendations

Encourage diversity of alternate route providers.

While Minnesota allows schools districts or charter schools to set up alternate routes, in practice the state has almost entirely approved only institutions of higher education (IHE) to provide alternate route preparation programs. A good diversity of providers helps all programs, both university- and nonuniversity-based, to improve.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.

2-D: Part-Time Teaching Licenses

State Analysis

Minnesota offers a Non-licensed Community Expert license, through which a school district can apply to the Board of Teaching for approval to hire nonlicensed teaching personnel from the community. The district must outline a number of items for the Board of Teaching in this application, including but not limited to the candidate's qualifications, the reasons for needing the candidate, the efforts taken to obtain licensed teachers for the position and the amount of teaching time for which the community expert would be hired. The district must also confirm that the candidate has been given the necessary criminal background checks.

Candidates for this license do not have to pass a subject-matter test.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statutes 122A.25

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Licen/index.html>

<http://mn.gov/board-of-teaching/images/Special%20Permissions%20Overview%202%20E12%20E13.pdf>

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Offer a license that allows content experts to serve as part-time instructors.

It is unclear whether the Non-licensed Community Expert serves as a vehicle for individuals with deep subject-area knowledge to teach a limited number of courses without fulfilling a complete set of certification requirements. It appears that this may be the intent of the license; however, state policy does not describe the conditions of employment, whether it is for part-time or full-time teaching or requirements that candidates must fulfill.

Require applicants to pass a subject-matter test.

The Non-licensed Community Expert could increase districts' flexibility to staff certain subjects, including many STEM areas, that are frequently hard to staff or may not have high enough enrollment to necessitate a full-time position. The state should require a subject-matter test to ensure expertise in a content area. Only a subject-matter test ensures that teachers on the Non-licensed Community Expert know the specific content they will need to teach.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with the facts necessary for this analysis.

2-E: Licensure Reciprocity

State Analysis

Teachers with valid, out-of-state certificates may be eligible for Minnesota's professional certificate, without specifying any additional coursework or recency requirements to determine eligibility. However, the state does not require evidence of effective teaching during previous employment in its reciprocity policy.

Although Minnesota does not grant any waivers of its testing requirements, out-of-state teachers who have not passed Minnesota's licensure tests can now apply for up to four temporary one-year licenses. This would allow out-of-state teachers up to four years to meet testing requirements.

Minnesota is a participant in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement, which outlines which other states' certificates will be accepted by the receiving state. This agreement is not a collection of

two-way reciprocal acceptances, nor is it a guarantee that all certificates will be accepted by the receiving state, and it is therefore not included in this analysis.

State Analysis Citation

E12 Education Omnibus Bill (2015), amending Minnesota Statutes 122A. 23

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Require evidence of effective teaching when determining eligibility for full certification.

To facilitate the movement of effective teachers between states, Minnesota should require that evidence of teacher effectiveness, as determined by an evaluation that includes objective measures of student growth, be considered for all out-of-state candidates. Such evidence should indeed be a factor for candidates who come from states that make student growth an important factor of a teacher evaluation, especially in a state such as Minnesota, which requires evidence of student growth to be a significant criterion of its teacher evaluations (see "Evaluation of Effectiveness" analysis and recommendations).

Ensure that out-of-state teachers meet testing requirements in a timely manner.

Although Minnesota requires out-of-state teachers to meet its own testing standards, the state allows up to four years for this important requirement to be met. Minnesota is encouraged to strengthen its policy and not allow a teacher to be in a classroom more than one year without having met the state's testing standards.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis. The state added that the E12 Education Omnibus Bill passed in 2015 stripped the ability of the Board of Teaching to require that candidates trained in other states meet the same requirements as those trained in Minnesota. Candidates may be licensed based on two years' experience (good or bad) and test scores alone.

3-A: State Data Systems

State Analysis

Minnesota's longitudinal data system for providing evidence of teacher effectiveness is mandated, or data system use is required in state policy.

Minnesota defines teacher of record as the educator responsible for awarding a mark and credit for the section. The state does not have a process in place for teacher roster verification.

Minnesota does not publish data on teacher production that connects program completion, certification and hiring statistics. In its annual Education Statistics Summary, Minnesota publishes only the total number of new teachers (newly licensed and first teaching assignment) for that particular year.

State Analysis Citation

Data Quality Campaign
www.dataqualitycampaign.org

Summary

<http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Develop a definition of “teacher of record” that can be used to provide evidence of teacher effectiveness.

To ensure that data provided through the state data system are actionable and reliable, Minnesota should articulate a definition of teacher of record that reflects instruction rather than grading and require its consistent use throughout the state.

Strengthen data link between teachers and students.

Although the state's teacher-student data link can connect more than one educator to a particular student in a given course, Minnesota should put in place a process for teacher roster verification. This is of particular importance for using the data system to provide evidence of teacher effectiveness.

Publish data on teacher production.

From the number of teachers who graduate from preparation programs each year, only a subset are certified, and only some of those certified are actually hired in the state. While it is certainly desirable to produce a big enough pool to give districts a choice in hiring, the substantial oversupply in some teaching areas is not good for the profession. Minnesota should look to Maryland's Teacher Staffing Report as a model whose primary purpose is to determine teacher shortage areas, while also identifying areas of surplus. By collecting similar hiring data from its districts, Minnesota will form a rich set of data that can inform policy decisions.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analysis.

3-B: Evaluation of Effectiveness

State Analysis

Although the state requires student performance data to be a factor, Minnesota stops short of requiring that objective evidence of student learning be the preponderant criterion of its teacher evaluations. The state requires districts to develop their own teacher evaluation process consistent with the state's framework, or if one cannot be agreed on, they must adopt the state's model.

Minnesota requires that an agreed-on value-added assessment model count for 35 percent of teacher evaluation results. For grade levels and subject areas for which value-added data are not available, state or local measures of student growth must be established. The state model uses student learning goals. A shared performance goal is also incorporated for all teachers, and at least three performance levels must be used.

The state's model rounds out the scoring with teacher practice (planning, instruction, environment and professionalism) counting for 45 percent and student engagement (including student surveys) counting for 20 percent. Regrettably, it allows teachers to direct how they are observed, and they may choose their raters.

Classroom observations are required.

Minnesota has received a flexibility waiver from the USED through the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statute 122A.40

Overview of State Model

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/TeacEvalWorkGrp/>

State Goal Score

Minnesota nearly meets this goal.

Recommendations

Require instructional effectiveness to be the preponderant criterion of any teacher evaluation.

Minnesota's evaluation system falls short by failing to require that evidence of student learning be the most significant criterion. The state should either require a common evaluation instrument in which evidence of student learning is the most significant criterion, or it should specifically require that student learning be the preponderant criterion in local evaluation processes. This can

be accomplished by requiring objective evidence to count for at least half of the evaluation score or through other scoring mechanisms, such as a matrix, that ensure that nothing affects the overall score more. Whether state or locally developed, a teacher should not be able to receive an effective rating if found ineffective in the classroom.

Ensure that evaluations also include classroom observations that specifically focus on and document the effectiveness of instruction.

Although Minnesota requires classroom observations, the state should articulate guidelines that ensure that the observations focus on effectiveness of instruction. The primary component of a classroom observation should be the quality of instruction, as measured by student time on task, student grasp or mastery of the lesson objective and efficient use of class time.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

3-C: Frequency of Evaluations

State Analysis

Although Minnesota's statute specifically articulates an annual evaluation requirement, it also speaks to a three-year professional review cycle that includes the following: an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator. It is, therefore, unclear whether what occurs in the years without a summative evaluation will result in an adequate review of teacher performance.

Classroom observations are required; however, it does not appear that they are guaranteed to occur on an annual basis for veteran teachers.

New teachers must be evaluated at least three times a year, and the first evaluation must occur within the first 90 days of teaching services.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statute 122A.40

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Ensure annual review of teacher performance.

Minnesota should clarify its requirements regarding the three-year professional review cycle to ensure that a tenured teacher's performance is adequately reviewed, especially for those years when a summative evaluation is not required.

Base evaluations on multiple observations.

To guarantee that annual evaluations are based on an adequate collection of information, Minnesota should require multiple observations for all teachers, even those who have nonprobationary status.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

3-D: Tenure

State Analysis

Minnesota does not connect tenure decisions to evidence of teacher effectiveness.

Minnesota has a three-year probationary period. At the conclusion of this period, the school board consults with the peer review committee charged with evaluating the probationary teacher to determine whether to renew the annual contract. The board and an exclusive representative of the teachers in the school district must develop a peer review process for probationary teachers through joint agreement.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statute 122A.40, Subd. 5 and 6, and 122A.41, Subd. 2

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that evidence of effectiveness is the preponderant criterion in tenure decisions.

Minnesota should make evidence of effectiveness, rather than number of years in the classroom, the most significant factor when determining this leap in professional standing.

Require a longer probationary period.

Minnesota should extend its probationary period, ideally to five years. This would allow sufficient time to collect data that adequately reflect teacher performance.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analysis.

3-E: Licensure Advancement

State Analysis

Minnesota's requirements for licensure advancement and renewal are not based on evidence of teacher effectiveness.

Minnesota's initial license issued to teachers in the state is the First Professional license. The Professional license is then renewed by successfully completing at least 125 clock hours of professional development, which now must be in the following areas: positive behavioral intervention strategies, accommodations and modifications to meet student needs, warning signs for mental illness in children, technology and in-service preparation in scientifically based reading instruction and effective integration of technology with student learning.

All individuals who were employed as teachers during any part of the five-year period immediately preceding the license renewal must include evidence of work that demonstrates professional reflection and growth in best-teaching practices. The applicant must include a reflective statement of professional accomplishment and the applicant's own assessment of professional growth in his or her license renewal materials.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Teacher Licensing Information

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Licen/index.html>

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.0300

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Require evidence of effectiveness as a part of teacher licensing policy.

Minnesota should require evidence of teacher effectiveness to be a factor in determining whether teachers can renew their licenses or advance to a higher-level license. Minnesota's renewal requirement for professional reflection on evidence of effectiveness does not constitute an objective measure of teacher effectiveness.

Discontinue license requirements with no direct connection to classroom effectiveness.

While Minnesota's targeted coursework requirements in accommodations and scientifically based reading instruction may potentially expand teacher knowledge and improve teacher practice, Minnesota's other general, nonspecific coursework requirements for license advancement and renewal merely call for teachers to complete a certain amount of seat time. These requirements do not correlate with teacher effectiveness.

State Response

Minnesota recognized the factual accuracy of this analysis. The state added that its Board of Teaching is planning to revise the licensure renewal process during the 2015-2016 academic year.

3-F: Equitable Distribution

State Analysis

Providing comprehensive reporting may be the state's most important role for ensuring the equitable distribution of teachers among schools. Minnesota reports little school-level data that can help support the equitable distribution of teacher talent.

Minnesota does not require districts to publicly report aggregate school-level data about teacher performance, nor does the state collect and publicly report most of the other data recommended by NCTQ. Minnesota does not provide a school-level teacher-quality index that demonstrates the academic backgrounds of a school's teachers and the ratio of new to veteran teachers. The state also does not report on teacher absenteeism or turnover rates.

Minnesota does report on the percentage of teachers with fewer than three years of experience and the percentage of highly qualified teachers. These data are reported for each school, rather than aggregated by district.

Minnesota's most recent Equity Plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in August 2015. The state's plan appears to further address the components contained in this goal.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Report Cards

<http://rc.education.state.mn.us/>

Equity Plan

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/resources.html>

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Report school-level teacher effectiveness data.

Minnesota should make aggregate school-level data about teacher performance—from an evaluation system based on instructional effectiveness—publicly available. Given that Minnesota requires teacher evaluations to be based to a significant extent on evidence of student learning (see "Evaluation of Effectiveness" analysis and recommendations), such data about the effectiveness of a school's teachers can shine a light on how equitably teachers are distributed across and within school districts.

Publish other data that facilitate comparisons across schools.

Minnesota should collect and report other school-level data that reflect the stability of a school's

faculty, including the rates of teacher absenteeism and turnover.

Provide comparative data based on school demographics.

As Minnesota does with highly qualified teachers, the state should provide comparative data for schools with similar poverty and minority populations. This would yield a more comprehensive picture of gaps in the equitable distribution of teachers.

Ensure that ideas outlined in the Equity Plan evolve into state policy.

Minnesota's 2015 Equity Plan outlines the state's intention to further report on the equitable distribution of its teachers throughout the state. However, because adherence is voluntary, Minnesota is strongly encouraged to follow through with its public reporting plan.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

4-A: Induction

State Analysis

Minnesota does not require a mentoring program or any other induction program for its new teachers. Local districts may choose to use allotted funds to provide a staff development program, or they may use the money for in-service training on violence prevention. If local districts decide to provide staff development activities, they must "provide opportunities for teacher-to-teacher mentoring" as part of staff development activities. The state has developed guidelines for mentoring and induction programs.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Educator Induction Guidelines

<http://teachersupportpartnershipmn.org/pdf/TSP%20guidelines%20final%203%2031%2009.pdf>

Minnesota Statutes 122A.60

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that a high-quality mentoring experience is available to all new teachers, especially those in low-performing schools.

Minnesota should ensure that all new teachers—especially teachers in low-performing schools—receive mentoring support, particularly in the first critical weeks of school.

Set specific parameters.

To ensure that all teachers receive high-quality mentoring, Minnesota should set a timeline in which mentors are assigned to all new teachers throughout the state, soon after the commencing of teaching, to offer support during those first critical weeks of school. Mentors should be directed to be trained in a content area or grade level similar to that of the new teacher, and the state should require program evaluation.

Select high-quality mentors.

While still leaving districts with flexibility, Minnesota should articulate minimum guidelines for the selection of high-quality mentors. It is particularly important that the mentors themselves are effective teachers. Teachers without evidence of effectiveness should not serve as mentors.

Require induction strategies that can be successfully implemented, even in poorly managed schools.

To ensure that the experience is meaningful, Minnesota should make certain that induction includes strategies such as intensive mentoring, seminars appropriate to grade level or subject area, and a reduced teaching load and/or frequent release time to observe other teachers.

State Response

Minnesota recognized the factual accuracy of this analysis.

4-B: Professional Development

State Analysis

Minnesota requires that staff development activities be coordinated with "the evaluation process and teachers' evaluation outcomes." Teachers not meeting the standards evaluated under the state's evaluation framework must be given "support to improve through a teacher improvement process that includes established goals and timelines." While Minnesota's evaluation default model provides ample opportunities for feedback between evaluator and teacher regarding evaluation results, the framework does not specify that teachers even receive copies of their evaluations or other feedback.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statutes Section 122A.40 and Section 122A.41

State Teacher Model Implementation Handbook

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/EducEval/TeachEval/index.html>

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets this goal in part.

Recommendations

Require that evaluation systems provide teachers with feedback about their performance.

In order to increase their effectiveness in the classroom, teachers need to receive feedback on strengths and areas that need improvement identified in their evaluations. As such, Minnesota should require that evaluation systems provide teachers with feedback about their classroom performance.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

4-C: Pay Scales and Performance Pay

State Analysis

Minnesota does not address salary requirements, seemingly giving local districts the authority to set pay scales and eliminating barriers such as state salary schedules that control how districts pay teachers.

Minnesota also supports a performance pay initiative. The state allows local districts to implement an alternative teacher professional pay system, Quality Compensation for Teachers (Q Comp), in which 60 percent of compensation is determined by teacher performance. Performance is based on schoolwide student achievement gains, measure of student achievement and objective teacher evaluations.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statute 122A.414

Minnesota Quality Compensation for Teachers (Q Comp)
<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/QComp/>

State Goal Score

Minnesota nearly meets this goal.

Recommendations

Expand the requirement for salary-schedule reform to include all districts.

Minnesota should require all districts, not just those participating in Q Comp, to emphasize teacher effectiveness in their salary schedules. The state should discourage all districts from basing teacher pay solely on advanced degrees and years of experience.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

4-D: Differential Pay

State Analysis

Minnesota neither supports differential pay by which a teacher can earn additional compensation by teaching certain subjects nor offers incentives to teach at high-need schools. However, the state has no regulatory language that would directly block districts from providing differential pay.

State Analysis Citation

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

Support differential pay initiatives for effective teachers in both subject-shortage areas and high-need schools.

Minnesota should encourage districts to link compensation to district needs. Such policies can help districts achieve a more equitable distribution of teachers.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

4-E: Compensation for Prior Work Experience

State Analysis

Minnesota does not encourage local districts to provide compensation for related prior subject-area work experience. However, the state does not seem to have regulatory language blocking such strategies.

State Analysis Citation

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

Encourage local districts to compensate new teachers with relevant prior work experience.

While still leaving districts with the flexibility to determine their own pay scales, Minnesota should encourage districts to incorporate mechanisms such as starting these teachers at a higher salary than other new teachers. Such policies would be attractive to career changers with related work experience, such as in the STEM subjects.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.

5-A: Extended Emergency Licenses

State Analysis

Minnesota allows in-state teachers who have not met licensure requirements to teach under temporary limited licenses if a particular position cannot be filled by a licensed teacher. Applicants must have "completed a college or university degree with at least a minor in the area for which teacher licensure is requested." This license is also available for out-of-state teachers who have not passed Minnesota licensing tests.

The limited license may be renewed twice. For renewal, in-state and out-of-state teachers must verify that they have taken the skills-area examination, and that they are participating in an approved remedial assistance program for support in the test areas that were not passed.

New legislation also allows the Board of Teaching to issue up to four temporary, one-year teaching licenses to "an otherwise qualified candidate who has not yet passed the board-adopted skills exam." This indicates that a teacher can teach up to four years without having passed applicable licensing exams.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.1250; 8710.0400

Minnesota Statutes 122A.09, Subdivision 4 and 122A.18

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

Ensure that all teachers pass required subject-matter licensing tests before they enter the classroom.

All students are entitled to teachers who know the subject matter they are teaching. Permitting individuals who have not yet passed state licensing tests to teach neglects the needs of students, instead extending personal consideration to adults who may not be able to meet minimal state standards. Minnesota should ensure that all teachers pass licensing tests— an important minimum benchmark for entering the profession—before entering the classroom.

Limit exceptions to one year.

There might be limited and exceptional circumstances under which conditional or emergency licenses need to be granted. In these instances, it is reasonable for a state to give teachers up to one year to pass required licensing tests. Minnesota's current policy puts students at risk by allowing teachers to teach on a temporary limited license for three years without passing required licensing tests, especially since the state's policy acknowledges that some of these teachers are

permitted to continue teaching despite having failed all or some sections of the required examinations.

State Response

Minnesota was helpful in providing NCTQ with facts that enhanced this analysis.

5-B: Dismissal for Poor Performance

State Analysis

In Minnesota, teachers may be dismissed for "inefficiency" as it pertains to the state's evaluation system; however, there is no explicit definition that ties inefficiency to classroom ineffectiveness. No teacher can be dismissed for poor performance until given adequate time to correct his or her performance. However, the state does not distinguish the due process rights of teachers dismissed for ineffective performance from those facing other charges commonly associated with license revocation, such as a felony and/or morality violations. The process is the same regardless of the grounds for cancellation, which include "inefficiency in teaching; neglect of duty, or persistent violation of school laws, rules, regulations, or directives; conduct unbecoming a teacher which materially impairs the teacher's educational effectiveness; and other good and sufficient grounds rendering the teacher unfit to perform the teacher's duties."

Tenured teachers who are terminated may appeal multiple times. After receiving written notice of dismissal, the teacher has 14 days to file the first appeal. The state does not specify a time frame for this hearing except that it must be "held upon appropriate and timely notice to the teacher." An appeal for judicial review is possible, but the state does not specify a time frame or the procedures for this appeal.

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statute 122A.40 Subdivision 8, 9, 13-17

State Goal Score

Minnesota meets only a small part of this goal.

Recommendations

Specify that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for dismissal.

Even though Minnesota links "inefficiency in teaching" to the state's annual evaluation process, the state should more explicitly define teacher ineffectiveness so that districts have clear parameters for terminating consistently poor performers.

Ensure that teachers terminated for poor performance have the opportunity to appeal within a reasonable time frame. Nonprobationary teachers who are dismissed for any grounds, including ineffectiveness, are entitled to due process. However, cases that drag on for years drain

resources from school districts and create a disincentive for districts to attempt to terminate poor performers. Therefore, the state must ensure that the opportunity to appeal occurs only once, as it is in the best interest of both the teacher and the district that a conclusion is reached within a reasonable time frame.

Distinguish between the process and accompanying due process rights for dismissal for classroom ineffectiveness and dismissal for morality violations, felonies or dereliction of duty.

While nonprobationary teachers should have due process for any termination, it is important to differentiate between loss of employment and issues with far-reaching consequences that could permanently affect a teacher's right to practice. Minnesota should ensure that appeals related to classroom effectiveness are decided only by those with educational expertise.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analysis.

5-C: Reductions in Force

State Analysis

In Minnesota, the factors used by districts to determine which teachers are laid off during a reduction in force consider a teacher's tenure status and seniority. School districts may only lay off tenured teachers after notice has been given to nontenured teachers. Nontenured teachers are placed on "unrequested leave first in the inverse order of their employment." Tenured teachers are also placed on "unrequested leave of absence in fields in which they are licensed in inverse order in which they were employed by the school district."

State Analysis Citation

Minnesota Statute 122A.40 Subdivision 11

State Goal Score

Minnesota does not meet this goal.

Recommendations

Require that districts consider classroom performance as a factor in determining which teachers are laid off during reductions in force.

Minnesota can still leave districts flexibility in determining layoff policies, but it should do so within a framework that ensures that classroom performance is considered.

Ensure that seniority is not the only factor used to determine which teachers are laid off.

While it is not unreasonable to lay off probationary teachers before those with tenure, doing so based solely on seniority and without also considering performance risks sacrificing effective

teachers while maintaining low performers, putting adult interests before student needs. Further, because probationary teachers draw lower salaries, the state may be mandating that districts dismiss a larger number of effective probationary teachers rather than a smaller group of ineffective tenured teachers to achieve the same budget reduction.

State Response

The Minnesota Department of Education did not respond to requests to review NCTQ's analyses.