

Alternative Teacher Preparation Program & Limited-Term Teacher License

Minnesota Board of Teaching

Report to the Legislature

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The Minnesota Board of Teaching is pleased to present this report in accordance with the requirement set forth in Minn. Stat. §122A.245, Subdivision 10. Specifically, the law provides:

The Board of Teaching must submit an interim report on the efficacy of this program to the policy and finance committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education by February 15, 2013, and a final report by February 15, 2015.

2013 Board of Teaching

Erin Azer
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Karen Balmer,
Executive Director

Report Outline

- I. *Development of Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Application* page –
- II. *Status of Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs* page
- III. *Appendices* page

Development of Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Application

Initial Response to the Legislation

The legislation authorizing an alternative teacher preparation programs was enacted early in the 2011 legislative session. Governor Dayton signed the bill on March 7, 2011. The Board of Teaching (BOT) quickly began work in response to the legislation and quickly discovered that there were a number of misconceptions about the legislation. Specifically, many individuals and organizations erroneously believed that the legislation authorized the BOT to grant the two-year limited-term licenses to individuals through an application process directly to the BOT. As a result our initial efforts were focused on disseminating information about this new process which authorized the BOT to approve alternative teacher licensure programs. We sought to clarify that once the Board approved a program individuals could enroll in the program and become eligible for licensure upon successful completion of the approved program. Examples of this work include:

1. Collaboration with a reporter from Minnesota Public Radio to publish an article entitled [“FAQ: Minn.’s alternative teaching licensure legislation”](#)
2. Information sent to the members of the BOT’s standing advisory committee, called Standards & Rules (see Appendix A)
3. Collaboration with the Educator Licensing division at the Minnesota Department of Education to publish a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document

Note: This document has been updated over time to reflect new questions we have received; the original FAQ was published on the website in June 2011.

Targeted Development Work

The Board of Teaching quickly initiated a process to develop a process to receive applications for alternative preparation programs in accordance with the new law. Our approach was three-fold:

1. Conduct research and gather information from multiple sources to inform the work
2. Engage Minnesota stakeholders in meaningful, ongoing dialogue
3. Solicit ongoing feedback from the Board of Teaching prior to bringing the final guidelines for adoption

Research

Board of Teaching staff sought to leverage the experience and wisdom of other states and organizations. Our outreach efforts included:

- Analysis and dialogue with state officials from states with existing policies and infrastructure for alternative routes to licensure; among the states we examined most closely were Washington, California, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin.
- Analysis of research and data available from the [National Association for Alternative Certification](#) and [National Center for Education Information](#)
- Examination of policies and practices for charter school sponsors (now called authorizers) who have financial oversight of a school, to help us understand the accountability mechanisms we should implement for non-profit organizations to become teacher preparation programs under the new law; BOT staff outreach included targeted dialogue with staff in MDE's Charter School division as well as staff from the Charter School Partners organization.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Board of Teaching relied heavily on our standing advisory committee, called Standards & Rules, throughout the development process. (The roster of the 2011-2012 Standards & Rules membership is included as Appendix B.) A summary of this committee's engagement is provided below:

<i>March 15, 2011</i>	<i>Initial email communication regarding the alternative routes legislation</i>
<i>April 14, 2011</i>	<i>Discussion at the Standards & Rules meeting regarding preliminary plans for implementation</i>
<i>May 19, 2011</i>	<i>Brief update regarding continued implementation planning</i>
<i>September 29, 2011</i>	<i>Review of presentation to the Board of Teaching (see September 23 below)</i>
<i>December 15, 2011*</i>	<i>Discussion of draft guidelines and BOT input</i>

Note: Additional invitations were sent for the December 15 meeting:

1. *Key legislators including the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Minority Leads for the Education Committees in the House of Representatives and Senate*
2. *Individuals who had contacted our office with interest in or questions about this process*

Board of Teaching Input

<i>April 8, 2011</i>	<i>Discussion of initial implementation plans for alternative routes legislation</i>
<i>June 17, 2011</i>	<i>Updates on implementation activity</i>
<i>September 23, 2011</i>	<i>Presentation of initial analysis and foundational assumptions for alternative route processes and requirements</i>
<i>December 9, 2011</i>	<i>Review and discussion of draft guidelines for alternative route providers</i>

Final Board of Teaching Action

On January 13, 2012, the Board of Teaching adopted the guidelines for the approval of alternative route providers. The adopted guidelines were posted on the Board of Teaching website following the meeting and have been available online since January 2012. Staff members in Governor Dayton’s office were also notified in advance of the Board’s adoption of the guidelines; see Appendix C. The guidelines are available as a separate attachment and also on the [Board of Teaching website](#).

Status of Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs

Despite substantial interest and publicity regarding the alternative teacher preparation program option, the Board of Teaching has not received an application. BOT staff members have had a number of conversations with potential providers but none have manifested in a completed application.

As noted in a [Star Tribune article on July 8, 2012](#), the Board “followed legislators’ mandate to establish a program that was flexible yet rigorous enough to produce well-trained teachers.” The Board has not received feedback to the contrary or any indication that the process set forth does not meet the spirit of the law.

As the regulatory body that will take action on applications that are received, the Board is not able to actively recruit or coach entities through the application process. However, Board of Teaching staff members have offered assistance to interested parties and stand ready to answer questions and facilitate the application process. The Board is eager to receive applications and to launch alternative teacher preparation programs authorized by Minnesota law.

APPENDIX A

From: Balmer, Karen

Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2011 5:18 PM

To: 'Ann Malwitz'; Balmer, Karen (MDE); 'Bill Kautt'; 'Bill Zimniewicz'; 'Curt Tryggestad'; 'Cyndy Crist'; 'David Leitzman'; 'David Rigoni'; 'Eugene Piccolo'; 'Garnet Franklin'; 'Jim Hoogheem'; 'Karen Wollak'; Melick, John (MDE); 'Michelle Page'; 'Mongsher Ly'; 'Nancy Dana'; 'Robert Klindworth'; 'Tom Pederstuen'; 'Toni Johns'; 'Tricia Denzer'; VanAernum, JoAnn

Subject: Standards & Rules cancelled for this Thursday, March 17

Hello! We will not be meeting this Thursday due to some other conflicts for both BOT and some of our S&R members. However, lest you think that we don't have any news for you, please find several updates below. ☺ I welcome your input on any of it!

As I'm sure you have heard, the "alternative routes" bill was signed into law last week. There is a great deal of both interest and confusion around this legislation so we have put together some materials to help disseminate accurate information. The link below will take you to MDE's home page where they have posted information, including the bill text, summary information, and an FAQ sheet:

<http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html>

I am also attaching a memo from the BOT with similar information but just a bit more detail.

On another front, we convened a group of ASD-specific stakeholders yesterday to help us think through our proposed transition plans for moving current teachers to the Autism Spectrum Disorders license. We received great feedback and should be ready to share more detailed information with you at our April 8 meeting.

Moving on to the TPA (Teacher Performance Assessment) ... Sally Baas is working on some targeted communications for school districts and we'll be sending that your way hopefully in the next several days, so be on the look-out!

Finally, an update about the voluntary paraprofessional credential – we've got a draft materials and a process that is now going through a "test run" with a small sampling of paraprofessionals. Your fellow S&R members Garnet Franklin and John Melick have been incredibly valuable in getting this going!! So we'll have more to share on this front yet this spring and we are targeting a statewide launch of the credential this summer.

Please let me know if you have questions on any of these fronts or updates from your organizations!

Thanks,

Karen



Karen Balmer
Executive Director



MINNESOTA BOARD OF TEACHING

Current Licensure Options:

- There are currently 2 primary routes to licensure in MN:
 1. Enroll in an **approved Minnesota licensure program** at a college or university; once licensure requirements (coursework, student teaching, tests, etc.) have been completed, the authorized representative recommends each candidate for licensure to the Board of Teaching.
 2. **If eligible**, an individual can seek licensure through a **portfolio option**; the portfolio is a compilation of evidence that may include coursework, professional experience, professional development or trainings to show that all licensing standards have been met.
- Both options apply to new teachers seeking their first license and also to licensed teachers adding a new field of licensure.

NEW Law to Establish Alternative Routes to Licensure

- The new law creates an opportunity for new licensure programs to be developed and approved by the Board of Teaching.
- The law requires the BOT to **establish criteria** that will be used to approve these programs. In addition to the use of a performance-based assessment that is required under the law, we intend to set forth rigorous criteria that maintain the integrity of a Minnesota license.
- The law requires the BOT to **ensure that all licensing standards are met, including both content and pedagogy standards**; the standards may be met in “school-based settings or through other nontraditional means.”
 - This does NOT mean that programs can ignore standards; for example, we could not approve a 5-12 (secondary) math program that did not address the geometry standards or an elementary program that did not address the reading standards.
 - This bill only allows the programs to demonstrate that they will meet the standards in ways other than traditional coursework. For example, standards may be met through:
 - Professional development trainings
 - Peer coaching/mentoring curriculum
 - Residency-based or other field-based programs
- The law does NOT allow individuals to seek licensure directly from the Board of Teaching; individuals will need to enroll in and complete an approved program and then be recommended for licensure.
- Timelines: It will take time for the BOT to thoughtfully establish criteria and to change the current rules to allow nonprofit organizations to be approved; once the criteria and regulations are in place, programs can be created and submitted to the BOT for review and possible approval.

Additional information relating to targeted questions:**... about student teaching:**

1. The bill requires student teaching within the instructional phase prior to entering the classroom; this phase must be a minimum of 200 hours.
2. The bill also requires “intensive, ongoing, and multiyear professional learning communities that accelerate teacher candidates’ professional growth, support student learning, and provide a workplace orientation, professional staff development, and mentoring and peer review focused on standards of professional practice and continuous professional growth;”
3. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Teaching to set criteria for approving programs under this authority; in setting those criteria, we will need to place a very high expectation on both the rigor of the student teaching experience prior to teaching AND the intensive support in the classroom from Day 1 in the classroom.

... about having a degree in the content area:

- The bill does not require a direct correlation between the candidate’s degree and the licensure field they will teach in; however, there are 3 content-specific provisions in the bill:
 - The candidate must pass all licensure tests, including a **content-specific test**, prior to entering the classroom.
 - Prior to receiving a full Minnesota license, the candidate must be evaluated on the same **content-specific performance-based assessment** as all other Minnesota licensure candidates; we are working towards implementing the **Teacher Performance Assessment** (out of Stanford) as this assessment.
 - While the bill requires the BOT to allow for some flexibility in how standards are met, it does NOT allow for standards to be ignored. **ALL standards**, both in content and in pedagogy, must be met by the candidates in these programs.

... about a partnership with a higher education institution:

1. The bill allows Minnesota schools to partner with colleges and universities that are already approved to prepare teachers.
2. The bill also provides a new option, to approve programs from education-related nonprofit organizations without being hosted by a college or university. Within this option, though, the bill requires that such a program have a consultative relationship with a Minnesota institution.
3. The Board of Teaching will need to carefully construct the criteria for approving a program under this authority; the bill calls for a number of required characteristics, including:
 - a. a research-based and results-oriented approach focused on best teaching practices to increase student proficiency and growth measured against state academic standards;
 - b. strategies to combine pedagogy and best teaching practices to better inform teachers' classroom instruction;
 - c. assessment, supervision, and evaluation of the program participant to determine the participant's specific needs throughout the program and to support the participant in successfully completing the program;
 - d. intensive, ongoing, and multiyear professional learning opportunities that can accelerate initial educators' professional growth and that include developing dispositions and practices that support student learning, orientations to the workplace, a network of peer support, seminars and workshops, and mentoring focused on standards of professional practice and continual professional growth;

So it will be critical for the BOT to embed these strongly and clearly into the criteria that will be used to determine whether a program will ultimately be approved to launch.

APPENDIX B

STANDARDS & RULES ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2011-2012	
Organization	Representative
MN Board of Teaching	Karen Balmer
MN Board of Teaching	JoAnn Van Aernum
MN Board of Teaching	Erin Doan
MN Board of Teaching	Geoff Alexander
Association of Metropolitan School Districts	Alice Seuffert
Education Minnesota	Garnet Franklin
Education Minnesota	Jane Gilles
MN Association of School Personnel Administrators	Tom Pederstuen
MACTE (Private Institutions)	Jo Olsen
	David Leitzman
MACTE (U of M)	Michelle Page
MACTE (MNSCU)	Scott Page
MN Administrators for Special Education	Tricia Denzer
MN Association of Alternative Programs	Bill Zimniewicz
MN Association of School Administrators	
MN Elementary School Principals Association	Jim Hoogheem
MN Association of Secondary School Principals	Dianne Thomas
MN Association of Charter Schools	Mongsher Ly
MN Association of Charter Schools	Nancy Dana
MN Association of Charter Schools	Eugene Piccolo
MN Department of Education	Rose Chu
MN Department of Education	Richard Wassen
MN Rural Education Association	Curt Tryggestad
MN Rural Education Association	Dan Posthumus
MN School Boards Association	Bill Kautt
MN Staff Development Council	Ann Malwitz
MN Independent School Forum	Robert Klindworth

APPENDIX C

From: Balmer, Karen (MDE)
Sent: Friday, January 06, 2012 9:53 AM
To: allison.jones@state.mn.us; Brian Wietgreffe (brian.wietgreffe@state.mn.us)
Subject: FW: Alternative Routes

Hello Allison and Brian,
I received a bounceback email that Hue is out on a leave and wanted to be sure that folks in your office are aware of our work on this front. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions!
Karen

*Karen Balmer
Executive Director
MN Board of Teaching
651.582.8888*

From: Balmer, Karen (MDE)
Sent: Friday, January 06, 2012 9:42 AM
To: hue.nyugen@state.mn.us; Korte, Daron (MDE); McHenry, Kevin (MDE); Doan, Erin (MDE)
Subject: Alternative Routes

Hello Hue, Daron, and Kevin!
Following up on our conference call a couple months ago, I wanted to let you know the status of the Alternative Routes to Licensure work. After seeking a great deal of input from both MN stakeholders and colleagues in other states we presented a draft of the Application Guidelines to the Board in December. The next week we convened a group of diverse stakeholders to provide a final round of feedback.

We have now taken all of the input, made revisions to the draft, and are planning to have the Board adopt the Application Guidelines at their meeting next Friday, January 13. Presuming that they adopt them, we'll be ready to release them to any interested parties and begin accepting applications. As we discussed on the phone, our intent has been to have the process in place so that it is possible that we might have these alternative routes approved and operational for the 2012-2013 school year ... and it looks like we are on target! (Of course we have no way of knowing whether we'll receive applications and if so, whether they will meet the requirements and be able to be approved ... but at least the process will be in place.)

Please let us know if you have any questions or if you'd like to discuss this further!
Karen