



Minnesota Board of Teaching

Staffing for Teacher Preparation Program Approval Responsibilities August 2013

Context:

Minnesota has a long history of preparing high-quality teachers to serve the diverse needs of Minnesota students. The on-going approval process for institutions and teacher preparation programs is one of the essential functions of the BOT and every day, Minnesota students depend on qualified, well-prepared teachers to help put them on the path to high academic achievement. These teachers come from many sources, but most go through one of the 32 BOT-approved institutions in the state of Minnesota.

We believe that an ample supply of rigorously prepared teachers is critical to the educational future of Minnesota students. Minnesota is one of ten states whose independent standards boards are responsible for educator preparation program approval. In order to assess the structure of Minnesota's approval process and whether we allot adequate personnel and resources to the oversight of teacher preparation programs, I compared Minnesota's practices with those of states with similar purviews.

Findings:

Table 1: States ranked by institution to program approval staff ratio

State	Devoted Staff	# Units / Institutions	# Programs undergraduate/post-baccalaureate	Institution : Staff Ratio
Wyoming	1	1	7 / 3	1 : 1
Washington	5	21	1367 total	4 : 1
Kentucky	6	33	706 / 514	6 : 1
Vermont	2	14	89 / 89	7 : 1
Oklahoma	2	23	252	12 : 1
Hawaii	1	14	38 / 138	14 : 1
California	6	256 (89 institutions, 167 districts)	990 institution-based, 319 district based	15 : 1
Oregon	1	19	120	19 : 1
Minnesota	1	32	549 / 223	32 : 1

Table 1 shows how Minnesota's allocation of resources and personnel compares to that of other standards boards also responsible for program approval. Four states (Wyoming, Hawaii, Oregon, and Minnesota) have only one staff member devoted to program approval. Of those, Wyoming and Hawaii both deal with much a much smaller volume of institutions. Oregon has about two thirds as many institutions as Minnesota, however many of their institutions are approved by NCATE and only require a state addendum to address Oregon-specific standards. Minnesota, with a 32 to 1 ratio, ranks lowest.

Of these, five boards are also responsible for the cost and person-hours associated with program approvals (Minnesota's PERCA: **P**rogram **E**ffectiveness **R**eports for **C**ontinuing **A**pproval). Three states require institutions to obtain NCATE program approval on the institution's dime, one allows some institutions to seek NCATE approval and others to seek state approval, and data on the final state (Vermont) was unavailable. When assessing these five states with comparable PERCA processes, Minnesota again comes in last in terms of program to staff ratio. These exceedingly high ratios suggest that Minnesota has a lot of space to grow. With additional staff, the BOT could provide more comprehensive and specifically tailored support to the institutions that prepare teachers for Minnesota's children.

Table 2: States ranked by program to approval staff ratio

State	Devoted Staff	# Units/ Institutions	# Programs (undergraduate/post-baccalaureate)	Program : Staff ratio
Oklahoma	2	23	252 total	126 : 1
Kentucky	6	33	706 / 514	203 : 1
California	6	256 (89 institutions, 167 districts)	990 institution-based, 319 district based	213 : 1
Washington	5	21	1367 total	271 : 1
Minnesota	1	32	549 / 223	772 : 1

Objective:

To ensure that all students are taught by rigorously prepared teachers, ready to teach national and state standards in diverse, 21st century classrooms.

Suggestions for consideration:

1. Increase staffing for unit and program approval to increase effectiveness and ongoing oversight and support.
2. Provide additional funding to support program approval processes and on-site unit reviews; or alternatively, authorize the BOT to charge a fee for these services.

Rationale:

Minnesota students deserve high quality teachers who are truly prepared to enter the classroom in their first year of teaching. Effective teacher preparation programs are critical to preparing teachers for the challenges of the classroom. When we consider other states whose standards boards are responsible for institution and program approval, Minnesota is far behind in furnishing the resources necessary to ensure that every teacher preparation program is rigorously preparing for the classroom. States, such as Kentucky, with similar numbers of institutions have significantly more staff members devoted to their approval and maintenance. By increasing the number of FTEs responsible for program approval, we can help guarantee that new teachers are truly prepared for the vocation.

Possible Benefits:

- Improve BOT oversight of teacher preparation programs in order to ensure program accountability.
- Maintain and improve the pipeline of qualified teacher candidates prepared to teach in 21st century Minnesota classrooms
- Provide more individually-tailored feedback and support to institutions to improve their teacher preparation programs.
- Ensure that programs are responsive to cutting-edge standards and policies designed to improve quality of instruction for Minnesota children.