For Immediate Release: Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Report

New report provides several findings on Minnesota teacher landscape

ST PAUL, MN — More than half of Minnesota’s teachers who hold a Tier 3 or Tier 4 License are currently not teaching in a public school or charter school, according to a new report published Wednesday by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB).

Among the key findings, districts and charter schools throughout Minnesota reported difficulty in filling teaching positions - many reporting being “somewhat significantly” or “very significantly” impacted by the teacher shortage and substitute teacher shortage. Additionally, nearly a third of new teachers leave teaching within the first five years in the profession.

These results are part of the "2021 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand" report, which provides a snapshot of Minnesota's teacher workforce for lawmakers, education stakeholders and the public. In this report, PELSB summarized an analysis of 2019-2020 state teacher licensure data and a survey of school districts and teacher preparation providers to create the report.

“Despite a new Tiered Licensure system and other policy efforts,” says Executive Director, Alex Liuzzi, “this report shows the consistent and persistent shortage of teachers in three main areas: (1) a shortage of teachers holding professional licenses in several special education fields, (2) a shortage of teachers holding professional licenses in multiple language licensure areas, and (3) a staggering lack of teachers of color and indigenous teachers in all corners of the state.”

The report indicated that, while there was an approximately 1 percent increase in teachers of color throughout the last biennium, Minnesota continues to lag significantly in the ability to hire and retain racially and ethnically diverse teachers even close to the proportion of students of color and indigenous students in the state. Findings showed that students of color made up 38.03 percent of Minnesota's student population while teachers of color were only 5.64 percent of the teacher workforce.

The report also denotes that the licensure areas that have the highest demand for more professionally licensed teachers lay within special education fields and include Academic and Behavioral Strategists amongst others.
The trend toward less supply of teachers and more demand from districts, specifically within targeted licensure fields, continues. These trends are not unique to economic development regions around the state.

“There remain more than enough teachers holding a professional license in Minnesota to fill all the need in our state,” Liuzzi said. “How do we incentivize and support these teachers in returning to the classroom is the question that remains.”

The report’s findings did not provide trend lines over time as the state of Minnesota transitioned to a new licensing system (Tiered Licensure) on July 1, 2018, and all old licensure types were converted by July 1, 2019. The Board is also advocating for resources to implement a statewide teacher survey to learn more about why licensed teachers are not working in the profession.

The full “2021 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand” is available to download on PELSB's data reports webpage.

PELSB is responsible for licensing teachers and related services providers in Minnesota, as well as overseeing Minnesota’s teacher preparation providers. The Board’s mission is to ensure all of Minnesota’s students have high quality educators in their schools. For more information about teacher licensure in Minnesota, visit the PELSB website.