



PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR  
LICENSING AND STANDARDS BOARD

# BIENNIAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR

FISCAL YEARS 2023 & 2024

A report submitted in  
accordance with Minn. Stat. §  
214.07.



MINNESOTA

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR  
LICENSING AND STANDARDS BOARD

# M I S S I O N

Ensuring all Minnesota students have high quality educators in their schools.



# V I S I O N

To ensure equitable education practices through high licensure standards, quality educator preparation programs, and stakeholder engagement.

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Table of Figures</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>A. Board Activities</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Committee Meetings</i> .....	4
<i>Board Member Information</i> .....	5
<b>B. Receipts and Disbursements of Board Funds</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>C. Names and Job Classifications of Board Employees</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>D. Rulemaking</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>R-4745: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Licensure Standards (Adopted)</i> .....	13
<i>R-4615: Licensing and Academic Standards (Adopted)</i> .....	13
<i>R-4841: 2023 Legislative Updates – Technical Only (Adopted)</i> .....	14
<i>R-4703: School Counseling Programs and Licensure (In Progress)</i> .....	14
<i>R-4863: Licensure and Program Changes (In Progress)</i> .....	14
<b>E. Licensure Data</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>F. Exam Data</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<i>Recent Legislative Changes Impacting Teacher Licensure Exams</i> .....	16
<i>Exam Locations</i> .....	16
<i>Pass Rates</i> .....	17
<i>Effect of Failing Licensure Exams</i> .....	17
<b>G. Ethics Data</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<i>Responsibility to Investigate Complaints</i> .....	18
<i>Disciplinary Actions</i> .....	20
<i>Conduct Review Statements</i> .....	20

## Table of Figures

Table 1: Number of regular board meetings, special board meetings, and committee years for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.....	4
Table 2: Active Board Members.....	7
Table 3: Former Board Members.....	8
Table 4: Employee Names, Roles, Classifications, and Dates of Employment .....	11
Table 5: Licenses, permissions, and renewals issued in fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 .....	15
Table 6: Exam Data .....	17
Table 7: Complaints Received by PELSB (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024).....	18
Table 8: Disciplinary actions Taken by PELSB (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024) .....	20

## A. Board Activities

During the 2017 legislative session, the Minnesota legislature combined the work of the Board of Teaching with the Minnesota Department of Education’s Licensing Division to create the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB). PELSB began operations on January 1, 2018.

PELSB is governed by a 13-member board<sup>1</sup> and is tasked with:

- Licensing teachers, including related services providers, in Minnesota.<sup>2</sup>
- Establishing and maintaining teacher licensure standards and requirements.<sup>3</sup>
- Establishing and enforcing the Teacher Code of Ethics.<sup>4</sup>
- Approving and overseeing teacher preparation providers and programs to prepare candidates for licensure in Minnesota.<sup>5</sup>
- Overseeing licensure via portfolio, a non-traditional pathway to a professional license.<sup>6</sup>
- Collecting and sharing data, including teacher licensure and assignments from school districts;<sup>7</sup> enrollment and completion data from teacher preparation programs;<sup>8</sup> and activities and outcomes of grant recipients.<sup>9</sup>
- Administering over \$20 million of grants and contracts to support teacher recruitment and retention, including:
  - The Teacher Mentorship and Retention of Effective Teachers Grant.<sup>10</sup>
  - The Collaborative and Greater Minnesota Educators of Color Grant.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> From 2018 to 2023, the Board was governed by 11 board members. The 2023 legislature modified the board membership by removing the HR representative and adding two teacher representatives and one teacher preparation provider representative.

<sup>2</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.09, subd. 4 (2021).

<sup>3</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.09, subd. 9 (2021).

<sup>4</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.09, subd. 1 (2019).

<sup>5</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.092 (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.18, subd. 10 (2023).

<sup>7</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.18, subd. 11 (2023).

<sup>8</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.091, subd. 1 (2023).

<sup>9</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.635, subd. 4, and Minn. Stat. 122A.70, subd. 6 (2023).

<sup>10</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.70.

<sup>11</sup> Minn. Stat. 122A.635.

- Preparation Pathways Grant.<sup>12</sup>
- The Student Teaching Stipend Pilot Program.<sup>13</sup>
- Teacher Marketing and Outreach Campaign.<sup>14</sup>
- Facilitating or co-facilitating the following legislatively named task forces:
  - The Teacher and Paraprofessional Compensation Task Force.<sup>15</sup>
  - The Special Education Licensure Reciprocity Task Force.<sup>16</sup>
  - The Paraprofessional Qualifications Work Group.<sup>17</sup>
  - The English Learner Task Force.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Committee Meetings***

The Board holds monthly board meetings, as well as relies on regular committee meetings to ensure board work is facilitated in a timely manner.

Table 1: Number of regular board meetings, special board meetings, and committee years for fiscal years 2023 and 2024

	Regular Board Meetings	Special Board Meetings	Committee Meetings
Fiscal Year 2023	12	0	72
Fiscal Year 2024	12	0	95

Board members attended approximately 36 hours of board meetings in fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024. Additionally, the average board member is assigned to two committees each year and spent

---

<sup>12</sup> Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 55, Article 5, Section 65, Subd. 7.

<sup>13</sup> [Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 115, article 5, sections 20 and 24.](#)

<sup>14</sup> Laws of Minnesota 2023, chapter 55, article 5, section 65, subdivision 10.

<sup>15</sup> [Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 115, article 5, sections 22 and 24.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 109, article 5, section 5.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 115, article 5, section 21.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Laws of Minnesota 2024, chapter 115, article 1, section 19.](#)

approximately 36 hours attending committee meetings each fiscal year.<sup>19</sup> These estimates do not include the number of hours Board members spent reviewing documents and preparing for these meetings.

The Board has the following standing committees:

- **Executive Committee:** Serves as the steering committee for conducting Board business.
- **Educator Ethics Committee:** Reviews complaints and results of investigations alleging or implying a violation and makes recommendations regarding whether to pursue a discipline against a teacher.
- **Legislative Committee:** Develops strategies for legislative initiatives.
- **Licensure Committee:** Reviews all licensure applications with possible denial.
- **Teacher Preparation Committee:** Reviews recommendations from program reviews and site visits.
- **Increase Educators of Color and Indigenous Educators Committee:** Facilitate stakeholder input and recommend policies and strategies to the Board that would help increase the number of educators of color in Minnesota.
- **Standards and Rules Advisory Committee** (includes representatives from education stakeholder organizations): Provide ongoing feedback on Board initiatives.

Additionally, working groups are frequently convened to solicit targeted stakeholder input and to assist with specific Board-designated initiatives.

### ***Board Member Information***

PELSB's 13 members are appointed by the Governor. Appointments and Board member terms are subject to the parameters set forth in Minnesota Statute §214.

Minn. Stat. 122A.07 establishes PELSB's membership, which includes:

- Seven teachers who are currently teaching in a Minnesota school, have at least five years of teaching experience, and are not serving in a position requiring an administrative leave, including:
  - One teacher in a charter school;
  - Two teachers from a school located in the seven-county metropolitan area;
  - Two teachers from a school located outside the seven-county metropolitan area;
  - One teacher from a related service category licensed by the board;
  - One special education teacher; and
- Two teachers currently teaching in a board-approved teacher preparation program;

---

<sup>19</sup> Committees typically hold one meeting per month. Each meeting can be anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours. For the purposes of this report, each committee meeting was estimated to take 1.5 hours.

- One superintendent that alternates each term between a superintendent from a school district in the seven-county metropolitan area and a superintendent from a school district outside the metropolitan area;
- One administrator of a service cooperative unit who oversees a special education program;
- One principal that alternates each term between an elementary and a secondary school principal; and
- One member of the public that may be a current or former school board member.

From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024, PELSB board members were assigned to and participated in committees in addition to participating in monthly Board meetings. The next page provides a roster of the Board's membership from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2024, as well as details about the terms of appointment, committee assignments.

*The remainder of this page was intentionally left blank.*



Table 2: Active Board Members

	Seat	Name	Initial Appointment	Term Expiration	Committee Assignments	Contact Information
Teachers	Metro	Angela Osuji	11/06/2019	01/04/2027	Executive* Increase Educators of Color* Ethics	<a href="mailto:Angela.Osuji@state.mn.us">Angela.Osuji@state.mn.us</a> 7238 Oakland Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55423
	Metro	Glazell Toledo	11/01/2023	01/06/2025	Ethics* Legislative*	<a href="mailto:Glazell.Toledo@state.mn.us">Glazell.Toledo@state.mn.us</a> 5122 Parker Circle Robbinsdale, MN 55422
	Greater Minnesota	Brandee Shoemaker	11/01/2023	01/06/2025	Teacher Preparation*	<a href="mailto:Brandee.Shoemaker@state.mn.us">Brandee.Shoemaker@state.mn.us</a> 1636 N 5 <sup>th</sup> St Montevideo, MN 56265
	Greater Minnesota	Jennifer Trask	07/03/2023	01/04/2027	Ethics* Legislative*	<a href="mailto:Jennifer.Trask@state.mn.us">Jennifer.Trask@state.mn.us</a> 20939 Old Jefferson Dr NW Solway, MN 56678
	Related Services	Amy Aho	1/17/2024	1/03/2028	Executive* Ethics* Teacher Preparation	<a href="mailto:Amy.Aho@state.mn.us">Amy.Aho@state.mn.us</a> 13275 Knollwood Dr Baxter, MN 56425
	Charter School	Janie Yang	07/03/2023	01/05/2026	Licensing*	<a href="mailto:Janie.Yang@state.mn.us">Janie.Yang@state.mn.us</a> 1687 Century Ave, #119 Woodbury, MN 55125
	Special Education	Dr. Gift Saloka	03/14/2023	01/06/2025	Executive* Increase Educators of Color* Licensing	<a href="mailto:Gift.Saloka@state.mn.us">Gift.Saloka@state.mn.us</a> 815 Golf View Lane, #9 St Cloud, MN 56301
Administrators	Principal	Dr. Quennel Cooper	04/23/2024	01/06/2025	Legislative* Increase Educators of Color*	<a href="mailto:Quennel.Cooper@state.mn.us">Quennel.Cooper@state.mn.us</a> 9198 91st St South Cottage Grove, MN 55016
	Superintendent	Dr. Kurt Stumpf	07/03/2023	01/04/2027	Licensing*	<a href="mailto:Kurt.Stumpf@state.mn.us">Kurt.Stumpf@state.mn.us</a> 3346 Old Stone Way NE

Seat		Name	Initial Appointment	Term Expiration	Committee Assignments	Contact Information
					Increase Educators of Color*	Sauk Rapids, MN 56379
	Cooperative Unit Administrator	Justin Hoelscher	07/03/2023	01/03/2028	Teacher Preparation*	<a href="mailto:Justin.Hoelscher@state.mn.us">Justin.Hoelscher@state.mn.us</a> 6328 175th St W Farmington, MN 55024
	Teacher Preparation	Dr. Lucy Payne	09/12/2018	01/06/2026	Executive* Teacher Preparation* Operations	<a href="mailto:Lucy.Payne@state.mn.us">Lucy.Payne@state.mn.us</a> 108 Warner Way Mahtomedi, MN 55155
	Teacher Preparation	Rochelle Dyer	04/24/2024	01/05/2026	Teacher Preparation* Licensing*	<a href="mailto:Rochelle.Dyer@state.mn.us">Rochelle.Dyer@state.mn.us</a> 5925 Westcliffe Pl St Cloud, MN 56303
	Public Member	Reuben Moore	07/05/2022	01/05/2026	Executive Teacher Preparation Increase Educators of Color*	<a href="mailto:reuben.moore@state.mn.us">reuben.moore@state.mn.us</a>

\*indicates an active assignment.

Table 3: Former Board Members

	Seat	Name	Initial Appointment	End of Service	Committee Assignments	Contact Information
Teachers	Greater Minnesota	Paul Peltier	07/02/2019	07/02/2023	Executive Licensing Legislative Operations Ethics	<a href="mailto:Paul.Peltier@state.mn.us">Paul.Peltier@state.mn.us</a> 315 Eaton Avenue North Fosston, MN 56542
	Related Services	May Lia Thor	03/08/2021	03/13/2023	Ethics Increase Educators of Color	<a href="mailto:May.Thor@state.mn.us">May.Thor@state.mn.us</a> 6417 Langer Circle Lino Lakes, MN 55038
	Charter School	Cesar Montufar	03/08/2021	07/02/2023	Increase Educators of Color	<a href="mailto:Cesar.Montufar@state.mn.us">Cesar.Montufar@state.mn.us</a> 807 Rainbow Ct.

	Seat	Name	Initial Appointment	End of Service	Committee Assignments	Contact Information
						Stillwater, MN 55082
	Special Education	Brian Rappe	01/01/2018	03/13/2023	Executive	<a href="mailto:Brian.Rappe@state.mn.us">Brian.Rappe@state.mn.us</a> 2330 Lexington Avenue S, #114 Burnsville, MN 55337
Administrators	School District Human Services Director	Julie Coffey	05/17/2020	01/01/2024	Licensing	<a href="mailto:Julie.Coffey@state.mn.us">Julie.Coffey@state.mn.us</a> 880 Moonlight Drive Woodbury, MN 55125
	Principal	Ryan Vernosh	06/30/2021	07/04/2022	Legislative	<a href="mailto:Ryan.Vernosh@state.mn.us">Ryan.Vernosh@state.mn.us</a> 3350 Highland Avenue White Bear Lake, MN 55110
	Principal	Dr. Jessica Cook	07/05/2022	07/31/2023	Licensing Legislative Operations	<a href="mailto:jessa.cook@state.mn.us">jessa.cook@state.mn.us</a> 3715 Greysolon Pl. Duluth, MN 55804
	Superintendent	Dr. Steven Unowsky	07/02/2019	07/02/2023	Legislative Increase Educators of Color	<a href="mailto:Steven.Unowsky@state.mn.us">Steven.Unowsky@state.mn.us</a> 5018 Emerson Avenue South Minneapolis, MN 55419
	Cooperative Unit Administrator	Amy York	06/30/2021	07/02/2023	Teacher Preparation	<a href="mailto:Amy.York@state.mn.us">Amy.York@state.mn.us</a> 66911 265 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Lake City, MN 55041
	Public Member	Abdi Sabrie	01/01/2018	07/04/2022	Executive Increase Educators of Color	<a href="mailto:Abdi.Sabrie@state.mn.us">Abdi.Sabrie@state.mn.us</a> 537 Linda Drive Eagle Lake, MN 56042

**B. Receipts and Disbursements of Board Funds**

The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board Receipts and Disbursements in FY2023 and FY2024.

	FY2023		FY2024	
	Appropriations	Expenditure	Appropriations	Expenditure
Operating	2,839,000	2,682,026	3,484,000	3,141,597
CUGMEC Grant	1,000,000	1,000,000	5,440,000	5,440,000
Mentoring Grant	2,906,000	2,906,000	3,395,000	3,395,000
PPG Grant	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Portfolio	34,000	0	34,000	34,000
Marketing and Recruitment Campaign	500,000	500,000	1,000,000	1,000,000

*The remainder of this page was intentionally left blank.*

## C. Names and Job Classifications of Board Employees

Table 4: Employee Names, Roles, Classifications, and Dates of Employment

Employee Name	Role	Job Classification	Start Date	End Date
Erika Adkins	Bookkeeper	Office & Administrative Specialist Sr.	May 15, 2019	N/A
Katherine Anthony-Wigle	Data Specialist	Research Analyst 1	October 3, 2011	N/A
Yelena Bailey	Executive Director	Executive Director	June 26, 2019	N/A
Grant Boulanger	Heritage Language Specialist	Education Consultant 2	October 25, 2023	N/A
Emily Busta	Licensing Supervisor	State Prog Admin Supervisor	September 10, 2014	N/A
Tanwapor Chino	Communications Specialist	Information Officer 2	September 29, 2021	N/A
Caren Custer	Licensure Compliance Specialist	Management Analyst 3	February 15, 2023	N/A
Cassandra DuRose	Licensing Executive	State Program Administrator	August 2, 2015	N/A
Laura Dyer	Grants Specialist	Grants Specialist Intermediate	September 15, 2021	N/A
Lexie Friend	Renewal Specialist	State Program Administrator	June 12, 2024	N/A
Stacy Jeffrey	Portfolio Specialist	Education Consultant 2	April 14, 2021	N/A
Jason Jensen	Licensure Permission Specialist	State Program Administrator	July 17, 2024	N/A
Keile LaMotte	Renewal Specialist	State Program Administrator	November 1, 1999	N/A
Elaine Mattila	Customer Service Representative	Customer Service Specialist Senior	January 3, 2000	N/A

Employee Name	Role	Job Classification	Start Date	End Date
Melissa Miller	Alternative Pathways Specialist	Education Consultant 2	November 1, 2023	N/A
Tyra Nelson-Reck	Teacher Education Specialist	Education Consultant 3	October 3, 2018	N/A
Debby Odell	Licensing & Operations Man.	State Program Admin Manager	January 2, 2007	N/A
Michelle Sander	Teacher Education Specialist	Education Consultant 3	July 17, 2017	N/A
Steve Rollin	Rulemaking Attorney	State Program Admin Coordinator	October 4, 2023	N/A
Rachael Ryan	Licensing Executive	State Program Administrator	September 23, 2023	N/A
Laurie Wermus	Customer Service Representative	Customer Service Specialist Senior	October 27, 1999	N/A
Michelle Hersh Vaught	Chief of Staff	State Program Admin Manager	September 24, 2018	N/A
Foua Xiong	Licensing Executive	State Program Administrator	November 4, 2015	N/A
Mai Yang	Customer Service Representative: Ethics	Office Specialist	February 7, 2018	N/A
Hanna Younce	Licensing Executive	Management Analyst 1	November 16, 2016	N/A
Maria Zaloker	Teacher Ethics Specialist	Education Specialist 2	January 8, 2018	N/A
Former Staff				
Therese Harrah	Office Manager	Office and Admin Spec Princ	October 25, 2023	July 15, 2024
Brian Cochran	Licensing Executive	State Program Administrator	March 8, 2017	April 14, 2023
Alex Liuzzi	Executive Director	Executive Director	October 22, 2014	January 3, 2023
Jess Larson	Communication Specialist	Information Officer 2	March 9, 2020	December 30, 2022
Sue Koehler	Licensing Executive	Education Specialist 1	August 8, 2007	December 12, 2022

## D. Rulemaking

The Board has broad rulemaking authority and relies on regular rulemaking projects to implement the state's tiered licensure scheme, update licensure standards, and oversee teacher preparation providers and programs.

### ***R-4745: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Licensure Standards (Adopted)***

In 2017, the Minnesota Department of Education began receiving intensive, federally-funded technical assistance from the Early Childhood Personnel Center (ECPC) to support the state's efforts related to the early childhood special education workforce. As part of this work, MDE facilitated a number of work groups focused on standards, retention and recruitment, pre-service training, in-service training and professional development, and assessment of the ECSE system.

One of the MDE workgroups conducted an intensive review of the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board's (PELSB) licensure standards for ECSE teachers and recommended that the Board consider replacing the ECSE standards with national standards as it has been over 20 years since the ECSE licensure standards have been updated in Minnesota.

In January 2021, PELSB authorized staff to release a first draft of proposed rule changes using the [Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists \(EI\)/Early Childhood Special Educators \(ECSE\)](#), which were adopted in 2020 by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) in partnership with the CEC's Division for Early Childhood.

In March 2023, PELSB adopted the Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Early Interventionists (EI)/Early Childhood Special Educators (ECSE), replacing the old ECSE licensure standards which hadn't been updated in over 20 years.

To learn more about this rulemaking, please visit <https://mn.gov/pelsb/board/rulemaking/ecse/>.

### ***R-4615: Licensing and Academic Standards (Adopted)***

In September 2019, PELSB initiated a rulemaking project to consider the following rule changes to:

- Clarify several tiered licensure requirements;
- Repeal outdated licensure requirements;
- Update the Standards of Effective Practice (the state's pedagogical standards); and
- Update a number of license-specific rules, including Health licensure, Physical Education licensure, Developmental Adapted Physical Education (DAPE) licensure, Parent and Family Education licensure, Adult Basic Education licensure, and American Indian Language, History, and Culture licensure.

In April 2023, PELSB adopted these proposed changes.

To learn more about this rulemaking project, please visit <https://mn.gov/pelsb/board/rulemaking/licensing-academic-standards/>.

### ***R-4841: 2023 Legislative Updates – Technical Only (Adopted)***

In December 2023, PELSB initiated a non-controversial project to implement technical changes to its rules to maintain alignment with statutory changes made during the 2023 legislative session. Changes included:

- Removing references to basic skills examinations, and
- Adding the new exemptions to the requirement that applications for a Tier 3 and Tier 4 license obtain passing scores on content and pedagogy examinations.

PELSB used an expedited rulemaking process, referred to as a “good cause exemption,” to incorporate specific changes stated in applicable statutes where no interpretation of law is required.

In June 2023, PELSB adopted these proposed changes.

To learn more about this rulemaking project, please visit <https://mn.gov/pelsb/board/rulemaking/rd4841/>.

### ***R-4703: School Counseling Programs and Licensure (In Progress)***

PELSB is considering changes to how it approves school counseling programs. Specifically, PELSB is considering whether to require these programs to hold accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) rather than require these programs to obtain state approval through PELSB by meeting state-specific standards.

PELSB also proposes allowing two grade levels of flexibility for counseling licenses, so counselors with older licenses (grades K-6 or 7-12, instead of the current K-12) will be able to change grade levels in counseling as needed (e.g. if their school district changes middle school grade levels).

To learn more about this rulemaking project, please visit <https://mn.gov/pelsb/board/rulemaking/school-counseling/>.

### ***R-4863: Licensure and Program Changes (In Progress)***

PELSB is considering changes to a number of rules in order to implement changes adopted during the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions as well as other rule modifications to clarify previous rulemakings and statutory changes, including:

- developing a new renewal requirement for teachers in American Indian History and Culture,
- modifying the rule governing licensure via portfolio to clarify and streamline the process for applicants seeking to obtain an initial tier 3 license or add to an existing tier 3 or tier 4 license, and



- adopting state standards for licensure in Computer Science, Early Childhood Education, and Ethnic Studies.

## E. Licensure Data

At the end of FY 24, there were over 110,250 licensed educators in Minnesota.

Table 5: Licenses, permissions, and renewals issued in fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024

License Type	Fiscal Year 2023	Fiscal Year 2024
Tier 1	698	892
Tier 2	894	420
Tier 3	2,755	3,281
Tier 4	29	615
Renewals - All Tiers	21,414	16,620
Out-of-Field Permissions	4,291	4,630
Innovative Program Permissions (IPPs)	484	Issued as CCDPs
Cross Curricular Delivery Permissions (CCDPs)	Issued as IPPs	487
Substitute License	2,904	3,033
Renewals – Substitute License	210	180

Note: If a teacher moved from a lower to higher tier during the fiscal year, the higher tiered license is the only license counted in the data above.

## F. Exam Data

The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board oversees the administration of the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE). The MTLE covers three primary areas of testing: Minnesota NES Essential Academic Skills Test; Pedagogy Tests; and Content Area Tests.

### *Recent Legislative Changes Impacting Teacher Licensure Exams*

The 2023 state legislature adopted major reforms to testing requirements for teachers. Effective August 1, 2023, a number of exemptions for testing went into place for teachers seeking a Tier 3 and Tier 4 license. The following teachers no longer need to pass content and/or pedagogy exams if one of the following are met:

- The teacher has completed a Minnesota state-approved teacher preparation program,
- The teacher has been recommended for licensure via portfolio, or
- The teacher has completed an out-of-state teacher preparation program and has completed all licensure testing in that state (or no testing was required).

Also, effective August 1, 2023, teachers seeking a Tier 4 license will no longer be required to demonstrate passing scores on a basic skills exams in reading, writing, and math (“basic skills examinations”).

### *Exam Locations*

With the exception of the World Language and Culture tests in French, German, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish, all MTLE are computer-based tests. The exams are offered at numerous different testing sites within the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area as well as throughout out-state Minnesota. The exams are also offered at more than 200 testing sites across the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and international countries. The tests are available at testing sites by appointment on Mondays through Saturdays (except holidays) throughout the year.

**The Minnesota NES Essential Academic Skills Test (EAS)** serves as the basic skills examination for Minnesota teachers seeking a Tier 4 license prior to August 1, 2023. The EAS consists of three subtests in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Teachers may also demonstrate their competency in basic skills by obtaining Board-approved passing scores on the ACT Plus Writing exam or the SAT.

**Pedagogy Exams** assess a teacher’s pedagogical knowledge. Prior to August 1, 2023, teachers seeking a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license must achieve Board-approved scores in a pedagogy test that aligns with their licensure field. After August 1, 2023, teachers who do not meet an exemption are required to pass pedagogy tests. The three different pedagogy tests include: Early Childhood (Birth to Grade 3); Elementary (Grades K-6); and Secondary (Grades 5-12).

**Content Area Exams** assess a teacher’s competency in the content area and is required to obtain a Tier 3 license. There are more than 30 different content-area tests. Prior to August 1, 2023, teachers must achieve Board-approved scores in the content-area test that aligns with their licensure field in order to qualify for a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license. After August 1, 2023, teachers who do not meet an exemption are required to pass applicable content area examinations.

Over the last several years, many MTLEs have become available through “online proctoring,” which allow the individual to take the exam securely from their home, school, or other location.

Finally, beginning in March 2022, a number of exams have been made available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish (test questions are presented in both English and the selected language).

### Pass Rates

The following exam results are based on test takers’ first attempts across exam areas for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 MTLE program years. Pedagogy exam areas are Early Childhood (Birth to Grade 3); Elementary (Grades K-6); and Secondary (Grades 5-12). Content exams include 34 content-area tests.

Table 6: Exam Data

	2022-23	2023-24
<b>Content</b>		
<b>Passed</b>	9,363 (89.8%)	2,200 (85.2%)
<b>Failed</b>	1,061 (10.2%)	383 (14.8%)
<b>Total</b>	10,424	2,583
<b>Pedagogy</b>		
<b>Passed</b>	5,027 (95%)	736 (91.8%)
<b>Failed</b>	264 (5%)	65 (81.1%)
<b>Total</b>	5,291	801

### Effect of Failing Licensure Exams

Under the tiered licensure system, only certain licensure tiers require a teacher to pass licensure exams (Tier 3 and Tier 4). Further, certain teachers are completely exempt from completing licensure exams, including:

- The teacher has completed a Minnesota state-approved teacher preparation program,
- The teacher has been recommended for licensure via portfolio, or

- The teacher has completed an out-of-state teacher preparation program and has completed all licensure testing in that state (or no testing was required).

Therefore, if a teacher is otherwise qualified for a Tier 3 license but is unable to pass the required exams (does not fall under an exemption), that teacher is also likely qualified for a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license and would be able to apply for a license upon securing a job offer from a school district or charter school in Minnesota.

## G. Ethics Data

### *Responsibility to Investigate Complaints*

Complaints can be filed by school districts, parents, former students, law enforcement agencies, interested citizens, and anyone else who has concerns about the conduct of a particular teacher. Anonymous complaints are not accepted. Once a complaint is filed and it is determined that there is jurisdiction for the Board, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, and with support from the Office of the Attorney General’s office, the Board conducts further inquiry and an investigation regarding the complaint. The teacher is notified of the allegations and given an opportunity to respond.

Table 7: Complaints Received by PELSB (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024)

Adopted Board Action/Disposition	FY 2023	FY 2023
Received Complaints	158	217
Applications reviewed	599	567
Dismissed Complaints	15	16
No Action Taken	93	162
Complaints Forwarded to Other Boards	1	10

Complaints that fall outside PELSB’s jurisdiction will be either dismissed or forwarded to an external board.

PELSB has the responsibility to investigate complaints related to teachers holding a Minnesota teaching license. The Board will act when a complain falls under one of the following statutes:

- a. **Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, subdivision 1(a)(1-5)** states [t]he Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board . . . may, on the written complaint of the school board employing a teacher, a teacher organization, or any other interested person, refuse to issue, refuse to renew, suspend, or revoke a teacher's license to teach for any of the following causes:
  - (1) immoral character or conduct;
  - (2) failure, without justifiable cause, to teach for the term of the teacher’s contract;
  - (3) gross inefficiency or willful neglect of duty;
  - (4) failure to meet licensure requirements; or

(5) fraud or misrepresentation in obtaining a license.

- b. **Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, subdivision 1(b)** states [t]he Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board . . . shall refuse to issue, refuse to renew, or automatically revoke a teacher's license to teach without the right to a hearing upon receiving a certified copy of a conviction showing that the teacher has been convicted of child abuse, as defined in section 609.185, sex trafficking in the first degree under section 609.322, subdivision 1, sex trafficking in the second degree under section 609.322, subdivision 1a, engaging in hiring, or agreeing to hire a minor to engage in prostitution under section 609.324, subdivision 1, sexual abuse under section 609.342, 609.343, 609.344, 609.345, 609.3451, subdivision 3, or 617.23, subdivision 3, solicitation of children to engage in sexual conduct or communication of sexually explicit materials to children under section 609.352, interference with privacy under section 609.746 or stalking under section 609.749 and the victim was a minor, using minors in a sexual performance under section 617.246, possessing pornographic works involving a minor under section 617.247, or any other offense not listed in this paragraph that requires the person to register as a predatory offender under section 243.166, or a crime under a similar law of another state or the United States.
- c. **Minn. Stat. § 214.10, subdivision 2(a)** states [a] board shall initiate proceedings to suspend or revoke a license or shall refuse to renew a license of a person licensed by the board who is convicted in a court of competent jurisdiction of violating section 609.2231, subdivision 8, 609.23, 609.231, 609.2325, 609.233, 609.2335, 609.234, 609.465, 609.466, 609.52, or 609.72, subdivision 3.
- d. **Minn. Admin. R. 8710.2100, Code of Ethics For Minnesota Teachers, Subparts 1 and 5** provides a list of 10 requirements for teacher conduct and allows the Board to take action against a licensed teacher who has been found in violation of the code, which includes the following:
- A. A teacher shall provide professional education services in a nondiscriminatory manner.
  - B. A teacher shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to health and safety.
  - C. In accordance with state and federal laws, a teacher shall disclose confidential information about individuals only when a compelling professional purpose is served or when required by law.
  - D. A teacher shall take reasonable disciplinary action in exercising the authority to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.
  - E. A teacher shall not use professional relationships with students, parents, and colleagues to private advantage.
  - F. A teacher shall delegate authority for teaching responsibilities only to licensed personnel.
  - G. A teacher shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter.

- H. A teacher shall not knowingly falsify or misrepresent records or facts relating to that teacher's own qualifications or to other teachers' qualifications.
- I. A teacher shall not knowingly make false or malicious statements about students or colleagues.
- J. A teacher shall accept a contract for a teaching position that requires licensing only if properly or provisionally licensed for that position.

All of the obtained information from the complaint inquiry is presented to the Board’s Ethics committee, which consists of two licensed and practicing teachers who serve on the Board. They review the information available and make a recommendation on what action, if any, should be taken against the teacher’s license. When it is determined that grounds exist to suspend or revoke a teacher's license to teach, the Board must consider suspending or revoking, or decline to suspend or revoke the teacher's license. If a suspension or revocation is recommended, the teacher can contest that recommendation and it may result in a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge. Once the entire process is completed, any disciplinary action taken by the full Board becomes public.

### **Disciplinary Actions**

The following data represents the type of Board action adopted and the number of each type of disciplinary action adopted. The tables below show the action taken on received complaints by both the PELSB from July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024.

Table 8: Disciplinary actions Taken by PELSB (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024)

Adopted Board Action/Disposition	FY 2023	FY 2024
Stayed Suspension of License	23	54
Suspension of License	0	3
Revocation of License	14	9
Licensure Denial	8	19
Surrender of License	2	13

### **Conduct Review Statements**

PELSB also reviewed all first-time applicants and renewal applications based on disclosures made on their Conduct Review Statement. The Conduct Review Statement asks applicants to answer the following questions:

1. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
2. Have you ever been referred to a pre-trial diversion program after being arrested?

3. Have you ever been acquitted or found not guilty of a criminal offense involving sexual conduct, homicide, assault, or any other crime involving violence?
4. Are any criminal charges currently pending against you in Minnesota or any other state?
5. Have you ever been the subject of a harassment restraining order, a domestic assault no contact order, an order for protection, a temporary restraining order, or similar civil protective order in Minnesota or any other state?
6. Have you ever been found in violation of a harassment restraining order, a domestic assault no contact order, an order for protection, a temporary restraining order, or similar civil protective order in Minnesota or any other state?
7. Have you ever been the subject of a maltreatment finding or disqualification by the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, a county human services office or similar agency in Minnesota or another state?
8. Have you ever had an education or other occupational license revoked, suspended, or denied in Minnesota or any other state?
9. Have you ever voluntarily surrendered or terminated an education or other occupational license because of misconduct?
10. Is disciplinary action/a misconduct investigation against your teaching, administrative, or other occupational license currently pending in Minnesota or another state?
11. Have you ever been terminated, suspended, resigned from or otherwise left an employment position after allegations of misconduct were made against you or when an investigation into those allegations was pending?
12. Have you or a school district in which you were employed ever been a party to a civil settlement, award, or agreement of any kind that involved an allegation that involved YOUR sexual conduct?

When an applicant answers yes to any of the above questions, their application is flagged for review by the Ethics Committee. The Committee reviews every application that is flagged on a monthly basis. The Committee reviews the Conduct Review Statement, any supplemental information provided by the applicant about their disclosures, the applicant's background check (if they are a first-time applicant), and any court records gathered by the Ethics Specialist.

If the Committee reviews the application, does not want to open an inquiry, and there are no discrepancies between the completed background check and the disclosures made on the conduct review statement, the application is sent to process. If the applicant meets the criteria for the license(s) they applied for, their license should then issue and they will receive an e-mail notification when this occurs.

If the Committee reviews the application and wants to open an inquiry into the application, the applicant will receive a letter requesting more information about their conduct review statement

responses. Once the Board has the response, if the applicant chooses to provide one, and the completed background check, the Ethics Committee will review the entire file and make a recommendation about the license.