MINNESOTA
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR
LICENSING AND STANDARDS BOARD

Memorandum

Date: **April 17, 2026**
To: **PELSB Board Members**
From: **Yelena Bailey, Executive Director**
RE: **Heritage Language Rulemaking - Report**

Background

Currently, the existing licenses to teach languages and cultures are English as a Second Language, World Languages and Cultures, and Bilingual/Bicultural Education. These rules have not been updated since 2001.

The Legislature approved a new pathway in 2023 for PELSB to guide and support teachers in becoming licensed to teach their own language and culture, recognizing difficulties heritage speakers of languages historically had navigating the portfolio process This pathway, staffed within PELSB, utilizes the portfolio process and World Languages and Cultures licensure standards.. Understanding that this was a new and complex endeavor, PELSB and Education Evolving, a local education advocacy nonprofit, entered into an MOA whereby Education Evolving would gather experts from the various languages and cultures represented in the cohort to advise and provide recommendations to PELSB on this licensure pathway. These final recommendations were submitted to PELSB in November 2024.

Across conversations, Education Evolving highlighted gaps of the existing World Languages and Cultures license to advocate for a stand-alone, specific Heritage Language. Education Evolving believe a new license should be created that honors the unique needs of Heritage Language learners and the educators licensed to guide them. K-12 Heritage Language programs require a deep understanding of immigrant and refugee community histories, complexities, and intersectional identities, which is also true for the existing ESL and Bilingual and Bicultural licenses (refer to proposed language in Supb. 4A).

Discussion

The Board authorized the Heritage Language Fellows to draft language for a new Heritage Language License in November 2024. Since then, the Board has adopted a guiding philosophy on streamlining licensure. The need for heritage language educators is clear. Still, the Board may want to discuss how this license fits into the broader work of the Board.

Options

This is a report. No action is needed.