MINNESOTA
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR
LICENSING AND STANDARDS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board

From: Steven Rollin, PELSB Rulemaking Attorney

Date: April 17, 2026

Subject: Recommendations of the PELSB Science Teacher Licensure Working Group – REPORT

Background

In April 2025, the Board approved work to discuss how science licensure will address licensure scopes and how to expand up/down in grade levels. A PELSB-facilitated Science Teacher Licensure working group ("working group"), composed of a broad range of science teachers, administrators, and teacher preparation providers, met and deliberated from November 2025 until April 2026. The working group determined the issues to be discussed in-depth and presented an overview of each issue, current statutes and rules, options for addressing each issue (with a discussion of pros and cons), and recommendations. The full report is in your materials at (LINK NEEDED).

In December 2025, the Board approved a guiding philosophy for streamlining licensure. For science licensure, the Board included a recommendation for fewer licenses and a simplified scope (e.g., 5-12 licenses) but that it is open to the recommendations of the working group. Additionally, the Board recommended changes to current policy to help science teachers gain a general license.

The working group proposed and discussed the following options:

<u>HS Science Licensure Issues</u>

- Option 1 - Maintain content science license at the high school grades
- Option 2 - One Generalized content science license at the high school grades
- Option 3 - Two Generalized content science licenses at the high school grades
- Option 4 - Continue to allow teacher candidates to obtain the current licenses, and add a 9-12 General Science license option

<u>MS Science Licensure Issues</u>

- Option 1 – Extend Science Licensure to Grades 5-12 – Single License
- Option 2 – Extend Science Licensure to Grades 5-12 – Two Subject Area Licenses
- Option 3 – HS Science Licensure – Two Subject Area Licenses, with full 5-8 as well
- Option 4 – Leave MS Science as is
- Option 5 – Add 6th Grade to all existing 7-12 Earth & Space Science licenses
- Option 6 – Add 9th grade Earth Science to all current 5-8 general science licenses
- Option 7 – Allow 7-12 and 9-12 licensed science teachers to test into the 5-8 general science license

Elementary Licensure Issues

- Option 1 – Discuss issues, but table the deliberation until Elementary licensure is up for review.

Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) Issues

- Option 1 – TPPs could adapt to streamlining HS science licensure.
- Option 2 – TPPs could adapt to combining HS and MS science licensure.
- Option 3 – TPPs should not streamline content or extend grade levels in HS and MS science licensure
- Option 4 – TPPs should expand coursework to include HS advanced courses in science

Recommendations

The working group agreed with the following recommendations:

The working group suggested science teacher licensing options and discussed the pros and cons of each option. These options have the support of the working group:

- High School Option 1 – Maintain content science at the high school grades (67% support)
- Middle School Option 4 – Leave middle school science as is (grades 5-8) (75% support)
- Middle School Option 5 – Add 6th grade to all existing 7-12 earth & space science licenses (67% support)
- Middle School Option 6 – Add 9th grade Earth Science to all current 5-8 general science licenses (50% support)
- Middle School Option 7 – Allow 7-12 and 9-12 licensed science teachers to test into the 5-8 general science license (50% support)
- Elementary School Option 1 – Discuss issues, but table the deliberation until elementary licensure is up for review (67% support)

The working group explored problems related to the selected options and what would need to be done to make them work:

- Rural and small schools are having a hard time finding science teachers
    - Encourage a streamlined method and alternative pathways for testing into other science licensure subjects (e.g., coursework or testing).
    - Review testing to make sure it is up-to-date.
    - Encourage "boot camps" and other professional development to train science teachers for additional science licensure.
    - Request legislation to help fund pathways for science teachers to expand their licensure.
- Rural and small schools have had to rely heavily on OFPs to meet licensing requirements.
    - Consider extending the OFPs for licensures for science teachers.
    - Consider Middle School options 5, 6, & 7 to add grade levels to some existing science licenses.
- The higher education programs were designed for specialized science licenses.
    - Work with TPPs to develop science education pathways to multiple science license subjects.
- Keeping the 5-8 license as it is does not provide a streamlined way for high school science teachers to add on a middle school license.
    - Consider a 5-8 endorsement for high school science teachers.
- Adding 6th grade to all existing 7-12 Earth and Space Science licenses would be a change to a legacy license instead of a current license.
    - PELSB has already allowed grade extensions for various non-legacy licenses, and this change would make good use of current science teachers with a 7-12 legacy license.
- Licensure rules need to change for science and those should inform the elementary rules and how those change.

    - We will need to make some recommendations regarding science specialists as well as pre-K science.
- Science teacher license academic standards need to match up to the science curriculum standards adopted by MDE.
    - PELSB should approve writing groups to work on the academic standards.
    - PELSB should meet with several neighboring states (MI, WI, ND) to discuss their experience with single science licensure.

Minority Opinion

A minority of members in the working group said the recommendations do not go far enough to address the current patchwork of hundreds of science OFPs in the state.

Request

The working group's recommendations are contrary to the Board's guiding philosophy for streamlining licensure; however, the Board should consider the deliberations and recommendations of the working group before any further action on science licensure.

Options

This is a report. No action is needed.