

## Teacher Preparation Committee: Variance requests related to student teaching and the edTPA

The Teacher Preparation Committee met on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, to review variance requests from 28 providers from across the state who have expressed major concerns with their candidates' abilities to complete the student teaching requirements, as well as other program requirements, as set forth in administrative rule, given the state-wide school closures and other efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

First, and foremost, the Teacher Preparation Committee wants to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic is creating unprecedented circumstances for our preparation providers, candidates, and school partners. The committee wants to thank the many providers who submitted variance requests and information about the status of their student teachers and other impacted candidates on such short notice. The information and context was invaluable.

### Context

#### Applicable state regulations

Student teaching:

Minnesota Rule 8710.1000, subpart 3G. For initial licensure, each program requires a student teaching period of a minimum of 12 continuous weeks, full time, face-to-face, which could be split into two placements, and in compliance with program-specific field experience and student teaching requirements set forth in parts 8705.2000 to 8705.2600 and parts 8710.3000 to 8710.8080.

Teacher performance assessment (edTPA):

Minnesota Rule 8705.2100, subpart 2(d)(4)(e). Evaluation of candidates seeking an initial teaching license includes the completion of the state-approved teacher performance assessment during the student teaching placement.

#### State school closures

On March 15, 2020, Governor Walz directed all schools to close beginning on March 18 through March 27, 2020, to provide time for the schools to construct continuity of education plans.<sup>i</sup> On March 25, 2020, Governor Walz directed schools to implement a distance learning period beginning March 30 through May 4, 2020, to provide a continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic while also preserving the health, safety, and lives of Minnesota's students, educators, and the broader public.<sup>ii</sup> During the distance learning period, public schools and facilities are closed for in-school instruction.

## Other agency and state policy approaches

Other agency and state policy approaches include:

- Allowing completion of student teaching through an online format:
  - The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is allowing candidates to complete the required number of student teaching weeks through online or distance learning.
  - The Arizona Department of Education is requiring teacher candidates to complete the 12 required student teaching weeks in an online setting.
  - The Maine Department of Education is allowing candidates to complete the required number of student teaching weeks by working with cooperating teachers to develop and monitor online learning.
  - The Minnesota Board of School Administrators (BOSA) is allowing universities coordinating field experiences to count hours their administrative students spent working in a school which has migrated to an online setting to count toward their 321 hour requirement. Additionally, BOSA is allowing students 18 continuous months to complete their field experiences (instead of 12 continuous months).<sup>iii</sup>
- Waiving 50% of the required number of weeks:
  - The Ohio Department of Higher Education is requiring teacher candidates to complete at least 50% of the required number of weeks. Additionally, the provider must ensure that each candidate has demonstrated sufficient mastery of the [required outcomes] through alternative experiences, which are provided by the provider, prior to recommending the candidate for licensure.<sup>iv</sup>
  - The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators is requiring candidates complete at least half of the required 13 weeks and obtain a letter of recommendation from both the cooperating teacher and supervisor attesting the candidate has demonstrated the appropriate trajectory of a typical successful student teacher.<sup>v</sup>
- Allowing providers to create alternative assignments and instruction in lieu of missed weeks of student teaching:
  - The Michigan Department of Education has granted all programs the flexibility to arrange temporary placements in other appropriate settings, provide virtual teaching and learning opportunities, or implement alternative assignments and instruction. Additionally, providers may waive any portion of the 12 weeks of internship requirements if it can be documented that the candidates has demonstrated fulfillment of state and institutional expectations.<sup>vi</sup>
- Allowing additional time to complete student teaching requirements:
  - The California Commission on Teaching Credentials is allowing teacher candidates to complete clinical practice in their first year of teaching or through a virtual setting.
  - The South Dakota Department of Education has granted teacher candidates an additional year to complete the requirements.
- Allowing credit for child care services provided:
  - The state of Michigan, via executive order, has authorized programs to grant credit for child care provided by student teachers in “disaster relief child care centers” operated in schools.<sup>vii</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that PELSB staff continue to monitor state legislation, including H.F. No. 4415, which would exempt current student teachers from all the requirements of Minnesota Rules, part 8705.1000, subpart 3.<sup>viii</sup>

## Scope of Committee's first set of recommendations

Due to the magnitude of requests, the Committee prioritized reviewing requests related to student teaching. Additionally, the Committee brings a number of questions for further consideration by the board about the state-adopted teacher preparation assessment (edTPA).

## Student teaching

State rules require a teacher candidate complete 12 continuous weeks of face-to-face student teaching. The Teacher Preparation Committee recommends the Board approve the following variances:

- 10 weeks or more of face-to-face student teaching;
- 6 - 9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by online or distance learning student teaching for a total of 10 weeks of student teaching (weeks do not have to be continuous); and
- 6-9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by replacement experiences or verification of preparedness (weeks do not have to be continuous).

Recommended conditions:

- All variances are limited to candidates completing student teaching in the spring of 2020.
- Providers must document for each candidate the following:
  - Weeks of face-to-face student teaching completed;
  - Weeks of student teaching completed through an online or distance learning format (if applicable);
  - Replacement experiences (if applicable); and
  - Other verification of preparedness (if applicable).
- Providers must have evidence demonstrating that candidates are prepared to teach prior to recommending them for licensure.

Board discussion needed for:

- 1 to 5 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented with online or distance learning for a total of 10 weeks of student teaching (weeks do not have to be continuous)
- 5 weeks or fewer of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by a combination of online or distance learning (not totally a total of 10 weeks of student teaching) and replacement experiences
  - Possible next step: Seek additional information from providers about how it will develop a detailed, individualized plan for each candidate, which would document replacement experiences and robust measures to ensure candidates are evaluated and ready to teach.

Please see "Recommendations by Provider," below, for provider-specific information.

## Teacher preparation assessment (edTPA)

State regulations require that a teacher candidate enrolled in a teacher preparation program for initial licensure complete a state-approved teacher preparation assessment during student teaching. In 2011, the Board of Teaching adopted the edTPA as its performance assessment. Minnesota does not require that a candidate meet “cut scores” to be recommended for licensure, but instead holds programs accountable for their edTPA pass rates.

The edTPA is a national, performance-based, research-based, standard-based, subject-specific assessment to “emphasize, measure and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom.”<sup>ix</sup> The edTPA is made up of three tasks: planning, instruction, and assessment. For the first task, candidates plan 3-5 consecutive lessons demonstrating how they are supporting students’ strengths and needs. In the second task, candidates submit unedited video recordings and analyze their teaching and students’ learning by responding to prompts. For the third task, candidates choose one assessment from the learning segment to identify patterns, summarize whole class learning, provide feedback on a few focus students, and plan for next steps.

Board discussion needed to review options for candidates unable to complete the edTPA as planned this semester:

- Does the Board support maintaining the requirement that current student teachers complete an assessment similar to the edTPA or a modified edTPA?
- Would there be options for current student teachers, who at no fault of their own cannot work with K-12 students, to complete an alternative to the edTPA or modified edTPA?
- Note: To date, three providers have requested a discretionary variance from rule to permit the provider to use a “modified edTPA” or to allow candidates to submit what they have completed for an internal review by the provider instead of by Pearson.

## Next steps

PELSB staff will release to all providers additional information about the Board’s discussion and decisions by the end of the day Wednesday, April 1.

PELSB staff will communicate directly with providers to share whether their variance request was approved or if additional information is still needed.

The Teacher Preparation Committee will continue to review variance requests from providers and will bring another set of recommendations to the Board at the next regularly scheduled board meeting, including variances related to:

- Additional licensure
- Middle level endorsements
- Field experiences

# Recommendations by Provider

## Student Teaching

Provider	10 weeks or more of face-to-face student teaching	6 - 9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by online or distance learning student teaching for a total of 10 weeks of student teaching	6-9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by replacement experiences or other verification of preparedness	5 weeks or fewer face-to-face student teaching supplemented by distance learning and replacement experiences with robust measures to ensure that candidates are evaluated and ready to teach
Augsburg University		X		
Bemidji State University	X		X	
Bethany Lutheran College	X			
Bethel University	X	X	X	
College of St. Benedict and St. John's	X	X	X	
College of St. Scholastica		X		
Concordia College Moorhead	X	X		

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Concordia University St. Paul		X		
Crown College		X	X	
Gustavus Adolphus College				X
Hamline University		X	X	
Martin Luther College			X	
Metropolitan State University	X			
Minnesota State University Mankato			X	
Minnesota State University Moorhead		X	X	

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Southwest Minnesota State University		X	X	
St. Catherine University	X	X		X
St. Cloud State University		X		
St. Mary's University of Minnesota	X	X	X	X
St. Olaf College				X
University of Minnesota, Crookston	X	X	X	
University of Minnesota, Duluth	X	X	X	

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University of Minnesota, Morris	X		X	
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	X		X	X
University of Northwestern		X	X	
University of St. Thomas	X	X		
Walden University	X	X	X	X
Winona State University	X	X		

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<sup>i</sup> Minn. Exec. Order 20-02 (March 15, 2020), [https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-02%20Final\\_tcm1055-423084.pdf](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-02%20Final_tcm1055-423084.pdf) (“Authorizing and Directing the Commissioner of Education to Temporarily Close Schools to Plan for a Safe Educational Environment”).



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- <sup>ii</sup> Minn. Exec. Order 20-19 (March 25, 2020), [https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-19%20FINAL\\_tcm1055-424862.pdf](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-19%20FINAL_tcm1055-424862.pdf) (“Authorizing and Directing the Commissioner of Education to Implement a Distance Learning Period and Continue to Provide a Safe Learning Environment for Minnesota’s Students”).
- <sup>iii</sup> Anthony Kinkel, Email (March 24, 2020), Board of School Administrators Rulings to help University Collaborative.
- <sup>iv</sup> Ohio Dept. of Higher Edu., ODHE Guidance related to Ohio Administrative Code Provisions Educator Preparation Providers.
- <sup>v</sup> Vermont Agency of Educ., COVID-19 Student Teacher FAQ (last revised March 19, 2020), <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-educator-quality-covid19-student-teaching-faq.pdf>.
- <sup>vi</sup> Mich. Dept. of Educ., Emergency Provisions for Apprenticeship and Internship Requirements (March 13, 2020), [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Apprentice\\_Internship\\_Guidance\\_684239\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Apprentice_Internship_Guidance_684239_7.pdf).
- <sup>vii</sup> Mich. Exec. Order 2020-16 (March 13, 2020), [https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MIEOG/2020/03/18/file\\_attachments/1405269/EO%202020-16%20Emerg%20order%20-%20Child%20Care.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MIEOG/2020/03/18/file_attachments/1405269/EO%202020-16%20Emerg%20order%20-%20Child%20Care.pdf) (“Expanding child care cases during COVID-19 Emergency”).
- <sup>viii</sup> H.F. 4415, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=House&f=HF4415&ssn=0&y=2020>.
- <sup>ix</sup> More about the edTPA is available at <http://www.edtpa.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN>AboutEdTPA.html>.