

Minnesota Superintendent's Conference, August 9/10, 2011
Educator Licensing Update

Outlined below is information about recently passed legislation in Minnesota impacting licensing of school staff, and an important update that relates to the licensing of staff for the upcoming school year. Please contact me if you have questions or need help. Best wishes for a great school year.

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1. Alternative pathways to teacher licensure. You might be aware that the Legislature passed a bill that creates the potential for “practice-based” (school based) teacher preparation programs. The Board of Teaching is in the process of setting up the guidelines for such programs, but their work will not be done until this fall. Actual programs, therefore, will not be up and running for a year or two. I thought information about the potential impact for superintendents might be helpful.

Opportunities for schools:

- Potential for selective recruiting of candidates and time to vet during them during their experience in your school; potential for early recruiting for teaching positions
- Can focus on particular subjects or student learning needs
- Potential to ground candidates in local policies, curriculum and students
- Professional career opportunities for teachers and administrators to become involved in the preparation of teachers
- An opportunity to create a more seamless alignment with induction and ongoing professional development for teachers is a requirement for these programs
- If you see potential, start reaching out to or consider whom you might partner with as possible program providers

Challenges/limitations of alternative pathways :

- A deceptively simple idea; implementation requires planning, effort, resources
- Not appropriate for all candidates (must to be an “experiential” learner)
- Requires an additional layer of school organization to create partnerships with a program provider
- Need to train teacher mentors and others for new roles
- Need to be very focused on your interests as a school in a situation where an “outside” program is taking place in your school
- Additional resources to start and maintain
- Communication is critical to all participants and partners
- Potential bargaining concerns about candidates who are “working” in a school
- Shared responsibility to counsel out unsuccessful candidates
- Greater expectations for initial support/induction for these candidates (OVER)

2. Tiered Licensure. New legislation also requires the Board of Teaching and Commissioner to create a task force to develop recommendations for a statewide “tiered” teacher licensing system, by February 2012. The intent of a tiered licensing system is to structure licenses for teachers which are more aligned with the professional standards expected for teachers at different stages of their career: pre-service; during the first one to five years; as a continuing teacher; and as a teacher leader. Licensure standards would guide teachers for each of these stages (tiers) of their career and the expectation is that a better definition of those standards will support improved teacher development and effectiveness.

3. Expediting. Despite the shutdown, Educator Licensing staff have been able to mostly recover through temporary measures to accommodate the peak processing of license applications during the summer. We appreciate your patience and do not wish any candidates, schools, or kids to be disenfranchised. Starting Monday, August 15th we will start “expediting” license applications for candidates for school positions who have a job offer (limited licenses or renewals *cannot* be expedited). The form for accomplishing this can found at the MDE website under Educator Licensing, and then going to the tab on the right side for “Licensing Information for Districts.”