



Office of the Legislative Auditor  
State of Minnesota

# Minnesota Teacher Licensure

Legislative Study Group on Educator Licensure

June 28, 2016

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# There are significant problems with Minnesota's teacher-licensure system

- **Laws**: undefined, contradictory, complex
- **Governance structure**: two agencies with unclear and overlapping responsibilities
- **Implementation**: problems throughout, from application through appeals

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# Key Legislative Recommendations

- Clarify teacher-licensure statutes
  - 2016 legislative changes helped
- Restructure teacher licenses
  - Consider a tiered-licensure system
- Consolidate all teacher-licensure activities into one state agency

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# Teacher-Licensure Overview

- Teachers are licensed for subject area and grade level
- Different licenses depending on requirements satisfied
- “Special permissions” for candidates not fully licensed
- Board of Teaching (BoT) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)

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# Multiple Changes to Teacher-Licensure Statutes

- Annual changes to statutes
  - Qualifying skills exams
  - Exceptions for not passing exams
  - Requirements for teacher-preparation programs
- Difficult for applicants and licensing specialists to know requirements

# Two Sets of Licensure Standards

Minnesota-Trained Candidates	Candidates Trained and Licensed Elsewhere
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal arts and sciences degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baccalaureate degree</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field-specific teaching methods <b>AND</b></li> <li>• Student teaching (<b>12 weeks</b>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field-specific teaching methods <b>OR</b></li> <li>• Student teaching (<b>no minimum</b>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human relations coursework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human relations coursework</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pedagogy</b></li> <li>• <b>Reading strategies</b></li> <li>• <b>Technology strategies</b></li> <li>• <b>Supporting English language learners</b></li> <li>• <b>Field experience</b></li> <li>• <b>Performance-based assessment</b></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass BoT-adopted licensure examinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass BoT-adopted licensure examinations</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Licensed in another state in a similar field and grade-level</b></li> </ul>

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# Teacher-Licensure Recommendations

- Clarify statutes
  - 2016 legislative changes helped
- Consider tiered licensing
  - Clear expectations
  - Consistency
  - Flexibility

# Sample Tiered-Licensure System

License	Duration	Renewability	Requirements
Tier One	1 year	Twice	Employer request and <u>one</u> of: bachelor's degree, teaching experience, passing licensure exams, etc.
Tier Two	2 years	Twice	Bachelor's degree and <u>two</u> of: Teaching experience, passing licensure exams, one year of training, etc.
Tier Three	3 years	Unlimited	Bachelor's degree, passing licensure exams, human relations coursework, training or equivalent
Tier Four	5 years	Unlimited	Tier three license + 3 years experience
Tier Five	5 years	Unlimited	Tier three license + 8 years experience + National Board Certification



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# Lines of Responsibility Blurred

- Structure is “confusing,” “frustrating,” “complicated.”
- Statutes state:
  - BoT must issue licenses
  - Licenses must be issued by MDE
- BoT independent in law but not in practice

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# Other Professions and States

- Shared oversight unusual
- Other professions in Minnesota
  - Health licensing boards
  - Department of Commerce
- Teacher licensure in other states
  - Most commonly state Department of Education

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# Governance Recommendations

- Consolidate teacher-licensure activities into one state agency
  - Advantages/disadvantages
  - BoT best option
- Clarify which agency responsible for what activities
- Interagency agreements
- Appropriate funding directly to BoT

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