

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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ISSUE BRIEF: High and Consistent Standards for All Teachers 2007 Legislative Session

MACTE is committed to having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. The Minnesota Board of Teaching, the Minnesota Department of Education, Education Minnesota, educational policymakers, school district administrators, school boards, and parents also express this commitment.

What really does stand behind the “highly qualified teacher” heading? It denotes a person who has obtained a bachelor’s degree, is “fully licensed in the core academic subject” that he/she teaches, and has passed the required state licensure tests. However, it is certainly more than a title. We would refer you to the substance of the definition. It also means someone who:

- *Meets the Minnesota standards of effective practice*
- *Assures the academic success of every learner*
- *Advocates for every learner*
- *Demonstrates a positive regard for the safety and welfare of all learners*
- *Teaches flexibly and manages the classroom responsibly*
- *Articulates well with parents, teachers and administrators*
- *Demonstrates a strong commitment to the advancement of shared principles of the school and its data-driven decision-making processes*

Minnesota’s current rigorous standards for licensure serve students best. Rigorous teacher licensure ensures strong content knowledge and effective teaching skills. Standards-based licensure programs use multiple measures of content, pedagogy, dispositions, and demonstration of classroom teaching ability. All of the MACTE institutions ensure that individuals are prepared to work with children and youth. Institutions are committed to working with individuals to meet standards.

Any route to licensure should ensure a highly qualified educator. Today’s classrooms are demanding and complex. Each classroom contains learners with different abilities, languages, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds. In effective teacher preparation programs, new teachers develop skill in differentiating instruction for learners and helping those learners to develop their own knowledge of content and skills. The integration of content knowledge and pedagogical skills allows teachers to make the content comprehensible to all types of learners and provides the specific knowledge about content specific procedures. Pedagogical instruction and practice during clinical experiences help new teachers manage current classroom complexities. Assessment of candidates’ ability to blend knowledge and skills in practice is imperative for ensuring a well qualified candidate for the classrooms in Minnesota.

All routes to licensure must meet the state standards. All routes to licensure should meet all standards. Minnesota has already invested in proven methods of alternative licensure to meet the needs of career changers who wish to go into teaching. Alternative programs involve weekend and evening programs and online options. All include clinical experiences, content specific pedagogy courses, and evaluation of dispositions.

Action Needed:

All teachers new to the profession and new to the state must meet all of the licensure standards

- The legislature should reaffirm the Board of Teaching role in requiring all teachers to meet standards.
- Incentives for hard to staff areas should be provided by the legislature
- Alternate delivery of content for rural and small schools should be supported by state funds so that all children have access to high quality and fully licensed teachers.
- Teacher development and teacher retention serve students best. Minnesota must support on-going professional and career development for all educators.

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