



Minnesota Board of Teaching

Frequently Asked Questions about the Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS) License

In January 2012 the Minnesota Board of Teaching approved a new Special Education license: the **Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS) license**.

The purpose of the ABS license is to prepare Special Education teachers to work across multiple disability areas. ABS trained teachers are prepared to provide services to students with mild to moderate needs across a variety of disability categories.

A teacher holding the Academic and Behavioral Strategist license is authorized to provide evaluation and specially designed instruction to eligible children and youth with disabilities from kindergarten through age 21 who have a range of mild to moderate needs in the areas of academic, behavior, social/emotional, communication, and functional performance. These students may be eligible for special education services in the primary disability areas of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), developmental cognitive disability (DCD), emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD), other health disorders (OHD), and specific learning disabilities (SLD).

The ABS license is an additional benefit to Minnesota school districts because teachers with this license will be prepared to provide services for students with mild to moderate needs in these disability categories. This allows districts more flexibility in terms of staffing and providing services for students. Districts may serve a broader range of students utilizing staff with this ABS license, thus avoiding the previous need to seek personnel variances for some of their teachers from the Board of Teaching (BOT).

Who is required to have an ABS license?

No one is required to hold an ABS license. Rather the ABS license is an option that allows a teacher to serve students with mild to moderate needs across multiple disability areas.

What else is required for a teacher who has an ABS license?

To renew the initial ABS license, an ABS-licensed teacher must also have a disability-specific license in one of the four licensure fields represented within the ABS license: Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Developmental Disabilities (DD), Emotional or Behavior Disorders (EBD), Learning Disabilities (LD). The teacher may have the disability-specific license prior to earning the ABS license or may earn the disability-specific license within the first five-year renewal period after receiving the ABS license.

The disability-specific license allow teachers holding the ABS license to teach the full range of student needs in the age/scope of the license area that they choose (ASD, DD,

EBD, or LD). This ensures that an ABS licensed teacher has both the benefit of broad preparation across multiple disability areas and a depth of expertise and understanding in at least one specific disability area.

Will a teacher lose the ABS license after 5 years?

An ABS license will remain valid for a teacher who:

1. Already held full licensure in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Developmental Disabilities (DD), Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Learning Disabilities (LD) prior to earning the ABS license and continues to meet the standard license renewal requirements.

OR

2. Earns a full, disability-specific license in ASD, DD, EBD, or LD within the first 5-year license renewal period after being issued the ABS license.

What are the options for acquiring an ABS license through a Minnesota Institution of Higher Education?

Several Minnesota Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) are approved by the Board of Teaching to offer an ABS licensure program.

The approved ABS licensure IHE programs may be contacted to ascertain what requirements are necessary to obtain the ABS license. For teachers holding current special education licensure, the IHEs will conduct a transcript review to determine what requirements have been met by previous course work and plan a course of action for the courses required for the ABS license. If your district allows, some institutions will allow you to complete a clinical practicum on the job.

For teachers seeking licensure in special education, see the document titled "[State Approved Special Education Teacher Licensure Programs](#)" for a listing of currently approved programs.

(<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Licen/SpecEdLicen/index.html>)

What does this mean for teachers coming to Minnesota with a special education license from another state?

Beginning January 1, 2013, the Minnesota Department of Education's Licensing Division began issuing ABS licenses to out-of-state teacher applicants who hold similar mild-to-moderate cross-categorical or multi-categorical licenses from other states and whose preparation is essentially equivalent to the Minnesota preparation for the ABS license.

Can a teacher be grandfathered into the ABS license if s/he holds one or more of the four disability-specific licenses and experience teaching in one or more of the disability areas?

No. Teachers with one or more of the four disability-specific licenses (Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Developmental Disabilities (DD), Emotional or Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Learning Disabilities (LD), should contact one of the institutions with an approved ABS licensure program. These institutions are prepared to conduct an analysis of prior coursework and credentials to determine what requirements remain.

See the document titled "[State Approved Special Education Teacher Licensure Programs](#)" for a listing of currently approved programs.

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