

TEACHER LICENSURE ADVISORY TASK FORCE

DRAFT

Report

Prepared by

Minnesota Board of Teaching

and

Minnesota Department of Education

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Executive Summary

Background :

Development of The Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examination, MTLE, began in May 2009. After a public bidding process Pearson Evaluation Systems was awarded the contract to provide testing for Minnesota Teacher Licensure. This contract runs through 2015.

As part of this development, in August of 2009, the Minnesota Board of Teaching directed that the MTLE Basic Skills Test be a “college-experienced” level exam. Work continued on the development of the test and in April 2010, Field Testing of the MTLE was conducted. In June of 2010, standard-setting review panels of Minnesota educators were convened, and in September of 2010, the MTLE was launched. The Board of Teaching adopted passing scores in October of 2010.

Since the launch of the MTLE in the fall of 2010, the Board of Teaching has identified several areas of concern for study and change needed for the testing program. Many of those issues and changes relate to the Basic Skills Tests. Basic Skills data was examined and analyzed in the following areas:

- Overall performance data
- Performance data by ethnicity
- Performance data by registration question
- Pass rates by attempt
- Score distributions

From this data examination, feedback from teacher candidates and teacher preparation program providers the following changes were made:

- Additional time for Basic Skills writing
- Preliminary passing status provided
- Shortened retake windows
- Increased testing opportunities and test locations

The Board continues to address issues regarding the MTLE Basic Skills . Among these issues are the following concerns

- o Has the MTLE caused unintended consequences?
- o Termination of teachers
- o Teachers replaced with less qualified individuals
 - Temporary licenses
 - Limited licenses
 - Substitute licenses
 - Community Expert Waivers

- Limiting the access of well qualified candidates
 - Non-native English speakers
 - Out-of-State- Licensure
 - Timed tests
 - Accommodations
 - Remediation
 - Immersion

The Board of Teaching is dedicated to assuring that Minnesota students are served by licensed teachers who are equipped to deliver effective instruction and able to meet the instructional needs of all learners. This is its primary focus and goal. In review of the data and the continuous improvement efforts by many in teacher preparation, there is no convincing evidence that passage of the MTLE Basic Skills test measures ensure that a candidate will be an effective teacher.

Charge to the Task Force

The Task Force was established to make recommendations on requirements for: teacher applicants to demonstrate mastery of reading, writing, and mathematics skills through nationally normed assessments, a professional skills portfolio, or accredited college coursework, among other methods of demonstrating skills mastery; and an alternative licensure pathway for nonnative English speakers seeking licensure to teach in a language immersion program. These recommendations are to be forwarded to the Board of Teaching, the education commissioner, and the education committees of the legislature (See Appendix A for the charge to the Task Force)

Current law requires the Board of Teaching (BOT) to adopt rules requiring a teacher candidate to pass a skills examination in reading, writing and mathematics prior to initial teacher licensure. The law also requires college and universities offering a BOT approved preparation programs to provide remedial assistance to those who do not achieve a “qualifying score on the skills examination.”

This examination has commonly been referred to as the “basic skills test.” Many questions have been raised about the level of difficulty or “cut score” established for candidates to achieve a qualifying score and have indicated that this level is well beyond a college entrance level.

One particular issue was the impact on teacher candidates for whom English is not their native language. Increasingly schools and districts are offering immersion programs and recruiting teachers from other countries to staff these programs so the students are receiving instruction by teachers proficient in the immersion language.

Task Force Membership and Activities

Membership on the task force was designated in statute (see appendix B). The Task Force held eight meetings beginning on August 1, 2013 and completed its work on January 16, 2014.

The Task Force agendas covered a variety of areas in order to fully understand its work as outlined in the charge. One of the first items on the committee's agenda was a detailed look at the current testing process. This included how the test was developed, how it is implemented and issues around implementation including retakes and accommodations. Presentations on test development, administration, scoring and other implementation processes were made by the assessment developer.

Materials that are used to communicate with teacher candidates to prepare them for taking the exams and instructions for test taking and other relevant materials were also reviewed. This included materials not only from the testing company but also those provided by the Board of Teaching and the licensing division at the Minnesota Department of Education.

The committee examined data related to the test results including the following:

1. Initial passage rates
2. Cumulative Retake Analysis
3. A demographic analysis of initial passage
4. A subtest ethnicity analysis

An integral part of the discussions was input from teacher candidates who have taken the exam and college faculty from BOT approved teacher preparation programs. Issues raised in these discussions contributed to the committee's analysis. Of particular interest to the committee was feedback received from listening sessions held with teachers and others to hear concerns about the current examination process and its implementation. One full meeting was devoted to listening to this feedback. The committee also received letters and emails offering feedback. .

Finally, research information, professional documents, news articles and other information was shared and discussed by the committee.

The Task force meeting schedules and meeting documents may be found on the MDE website at the following link:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/TeachLicenTaskForce/index.htm>

Teacher Licensure Advisory Task Force Recommendations

Recommendation # 1:

The task force recommends repealing Minnesota Statute 122A.09 Sub part b that requires a teacher candidate to pass a skills examination in reading, writing and mathematics. These three subtests have been commonly referred to as the “basic skills” test. The task force supports the continuation of the requirement that a teacher candidate pass examinations in pedagogy and content areas as approved by the Board.

122A.09 DUTIES.

(b) The board must adopt rules requiring a person to pass a skills examination in reading, writing, and mathematics as a requirement for initial teacher licensure, except that the board may issue up to two additional temporary, one-year teaching licenses to an otherwise qualified candidate who has not yet passed the skills exam. Such rules must require college and universities offering a board-approved teacher preparation program to provide remedial assistance to persons who did not achieve a qualifying score on the skills examination, including those for whom English is a second language.

(e) The board must adopt rules requiring candidates for initial licenses to pass an examination of general pedagogical knowledge and examinations of licensure-specific teaching skills. The rules shall be effective by September 1, 2001. The rules under this paragraph also must require candidates for initial licenses to teach prekindergarten or elementary students to pass, as part of the examination of licensure-specific teaching skills, test items assessing the candidates' knowledge, skill, and ability in comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction under section [122A.06](#), subdivision 4, and their knowledge and understanding of the foundations of reading development, the development of reading comprehension, and reading assessment and instruction, and their ability to integrate that knowledge and understanding.

Recommendation #2:

The task force recommends that the Board of Teaching develop requirements as part of its approval process for teacher preparation programs that include assurances that prior to graduation and upon successful completion of an accredited teacher preparation program, teacher candidates are proficient in reading, writing and mathematics at a college entrance level.

(c) The board must adopt rules to approve teacher preparation programs. The board, upon the request of a postsecondary student preparing for teacher licensure or a licensed

graduate of a teacher preparation program, shall assist in resolving a dispute between the person and a postsecondary institution providing a teacher preparation program when the dispute involves an institution's recommendation for licensure affecting the person or the person's credentials. At the board's discretion, assistance may include the application of chapter 14.

Recommendation # 3:

The task force recommends that teacher candidates who do not graduate from a Board approved teacher preparation program, must demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics at a college entrance level and may do so in one of the following ways:

- Through a Portfolio
- edTPA
- Other nationally-normed tests,
- Coursework
- Licensure from other state
- Get credit for teaching in other states/countries
- Other alternative (non-test) pathways

TEACHER LICENSURE ADVISORY TASK FORCE

Subdivision 1. **Establishment and duties.** (a) A Teacher Licensure Advisory Task Force is established to make recommendations to the Board of Teaching, the education commissioner, and the education committees of the legislature on requirements for: teacher applicants to demonstrate mastery of reading, writing, and mathematics skills through nationally normed assessments, a professional skills portfolio, or accredited college coursework, among other methods of demonstrating skills mastery; and an alternative licensure pathway for nonnative English speakers seeking licensure to teach in a language immersion program.

(b) Task force recommendations on how teacher candidates demonstrate skills mastery must encompass the following criteria:

- (1) assessment content must be relevant to the teacher's subject area licensure;
- (2) the scope of assessment content must be documented in sufficient detail to correspond to a similarly detailed description of relevant public school curriculum;
- (3) the scope of assessment content must be publicly available and readily accessible on the Web site of the Board of Teaching and all Minnesota board-approved teacher preparation programs and institutions;
- (4) the Board of Teaching and all Minnesota board-approved teacher preparation programs and institutions, upon request, must make available to the public at cost a written review of the scope of assessment content;
- (5) if applicable, and consistent with federal and state data practices laws including the definition of summary data under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.02, subdivision 19, the Board of Teaching and all Minnesota board-approved teacher preparation programs and institutions annually must post on their Web site up-to-date longitudinal summary data showing teacher candidates' overall passing rate and the passing rate for each demographic group of teacher candidates taking a skills assessment in that school year and in previous school years;
- (6) reliable evidence showing assessment content is not culturally biased;
- (7) the Board of Teaching and all Minnesota board-approved teacher preparation programs and institutions must appropriately accommodate teacher candidates with documented learning disabilities, including an appeals process if a request for accommodations is denied; and
- (8) if applicable, give timely, detailed item analysis feedback to teacher candidates who do not pass the skills assessment sufficient for the candidate to target specific areas of deficiency for appropriate remediation.

Subd. 2. **Membership.** The Teacher Licensure Advisory Task Force shall be composed of the following 20 members appointed by July 15, 2013:

- (1) two members of the Board of Teaching appointed by the board's chair;
- (2) two representatives from the Department of Education appointed by the commissioner of education;

- (3) two members of the house of representatives, one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, and one appointed by the minority leader;
- (4) two senators, one appointed by the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration, and one appointed by the minority leader;
- (5) one elementary school principal from rural Minnesota appointed by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and one secondary school principal from the seven-county metropolitan area appointed by the Minnesota Secondary School Principals Association;
- (6) one licensed and practicing public elementary school teacher and one licensed and practicing secondary school teacher appointed by Education Minnesota;
- (7) one teacher preparation faculty member each from the University of Minnesota system appointed by the system president, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system appointed by the system chancellor, and the Minnesota Private Colleges and Universities system appointed by the Minnesota Private Colleges Council;
- (8) one member of the nonpublic education council appointed by the council;
- (9) one representative of Minnesota charter schools appointed by the Minnesota Charter Schools Association;
- (10) two representatives from the business community, appointed by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; and
- (11) one representative from the Minnesota School Boards Association.

Subd. 3. **First meeting; chair.** The executive director of the Board of Teaching and the commissioner of education jointly must convene the task force by August 1, 2013, and shall appoint a chair from the membership of the task force.

Subd. 4. **Report.** By February 1, 2014, task force members must submit to the Board of Teaching, the education commissioner, and to the chairs and ranking minority members of the senate and house of representatives committees and divisions with primary jurisdiction over K-12 education their written recommendations on requirements for teacher applicants to demonstrate mastery of reading, writing, and mathematics skills and for an alternative licensure pathway for nonnative English speakers seeking licensure to teach in a language immersion program.

Subd. 5. **Sunset.** The task force shall sunset the day after submitting the report under subdivision 6, or February 2, 2014, whichever is earlier.

Subd. 6. **Support.** The executive director of the board and the commissioner of education must provide technical assistance to task force members upon request.

Subd. 7. **Board of Teaching rules.** The Board of Teaching must consider the recommendations of the advisory task force and adopt revised rules by January 1, 2015, governing the skills portion of the teacher licensure exam.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Appendix B: Teacher Licensure Advisory Task Force Membership

Co-Chairs

John Bellingham, Teacher; Chair, Minnesota Board of Teaching; Faribault
Representing: Board of Teaching (BOT)

Dr. Christopher Smith, Assistant Professor; Augsburg College; Minneapolis
Representing: Minnesota Private Colleges Council

Members

Joshua Alexander, Ed.D., Principal; McGuire Middle School Lakeville
Representing: Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)

Nancy Antoine, Elementary Principal; Bridgewater Elementary School, Northfield
Representing: Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA)

James Barnhill, Minnesota Board of Teaching
Representing: Board of Teaching (BOT)

Jim Bartholomew, Education Policy Director; Minnesota Business Partnership
Representing: Chambers of Commerce

Joyce Bauman, Teacher; Cold Spring Elementary, Cold Spring
Representing: Education Minnesota (EdMN)

Senator Kevin Dahle (Northfield)
Representing: Minnesota Legislature

Dan De Bruyn, Associate Director, Minnesota Association of Charter Schools
Representing Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS)

Representative Sondra Erickson (Princeton)
Representing: Minnesota Legislature

Steve Hornstein, Professor; Inter Faculty Organization; St. Cloud State
Representing: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU)

Scot Hovan, Physics/Engineering Teacher; Mahtomedi High School
Representing: Education Minnesota (EdMN)

George Kimball, School Board Treasurer; White Bear Lake Area Schools
Representing: Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)

Dr. Bob Klindworth, Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council; North Mankato,
Representing: Nonpublic Education Council

Deborah Luedtke, Supervisor, Division of School Support
Representing: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)

Senator Sean Neinow (Cambridge)
Representing: Minnesota Legislature

Dr. Susan Ranney, Senior Lecturer; University of Minnesota
Representing: University of Minnesota (U of M)

Amy Walstien, Director, Education Policy; Minnesota Chambers of Commerce
Representing: Chambers of Commerce

Richard Wassen, Director, Teacher Licensure
Minnesota Department of Education
Representing: Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)

Representative Barb Yarusso (Shoreview)
Representing: Minnesota Legislature

Staff

Karen Balmer, Director; Board of Teaching (Through August)

Rose Hermodson, Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education

Kevin McHenry, Assistant Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Education

Materials from this Task Force may be found at the following MDE website link:

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/TeachLicenTaskForce/index.htm>