

Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HF950. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) oversees the state standards required to be a licensed teacher in Minnesota. These robust standards cover a wide scope of pedagogical and content knowledge and skills.

While Tiered Licensure has provided much needed clarity to teacher licensure, there are elements that still concern the Board in ensuring every classroom in Minnesota has a quality teacher. For this reason, PELSB supports removal of the Tier 2 to Tier 3 pathway after three years of teaching.

The Board supports the removal of this pathway for the following reasons:

- This is the only pathway to a professional license in Minnesota that does not require an individual to evidence meeting state teacher standards.
- To qualify for this pathway after three years, the teacher must not have been placed on an improvement plan. An evaluation by a supervisor does not signify that a teacher is prepared to teach in a variety of schools and settings or that the teacher has the content knowledge necessary for effective teaching.
- Minnesota is one of the few states that has an established pathway (Licensure via Portfolio) to allow a teacher to obtain professional licensure without formal teacher preparation. While Licensure via Portfolio does not require teacher preparation, it still requires a teacher to evidence the required pedagogical and content standards.
- All current and future statutory and rule changes to essential teacher preparation requirements (i.e. scientifically-based reading instruction) will not apply to individuals in this pathway.
- A Tier 3 license should be reserved for teachers who have evidenced the content and pedagogical knowledge and skills to teach all students and in a variety of settings.

Over the past three years, many have argued that removal of this pathway will be a barrier to teacher licensure. PELSB disagrees. PELSB is actively working to identify and remove barriers to teacher licensure while maintaining high standards. Rather than removing high standards, PELSB believes all educators should have the resources and support necessary to enter and remain in the profession, regardless of their background.

- Three years of data on the impact of Tiered Licensure has shown that the more substantial barrier to a Tier 3 license for out-of-state teachers and teachers of color are the required content and pedagogy exams,¹ which is why PELSB supports the removal of exams to obtain a Tier 3.

¹ Nearly 70% teachers holding a Tier 2 license have completed teacher preparation or are in the process of completing teacher preparation. If content and pedagogy testing were removed, almost 1,000 teachers would

- There have been anecdotes circulated of teachers with years of experience who may be removed from the classroom because of this proposal. This is a misrepresentation. These individuals can teach on a Tier 2 license for eight or more years. These individuals, if effective educators - possessing the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in Minnesota, can use the licensure via portfolio pathway to obtain a Tier 3 license by evidencing the state standards for the profession of education.
- There are anecdotes of teachers who have completed teacher preparation but require this pathway to teach. This is inaccurate. These individuals would qualify for a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license, but are instead seeking to use this pathway to change the licensure area they teach to content outside of their teacher preparation (i.e. Tier 4 in Elementary Education but wanting a Secondary Math license through experience only).

Tiered Licensure has shown that Tier 1 and Tier 2 licenses can work as a way to bring individuals of color and indigenous teachers into the profession. Supporting individuals on these tiers through mentorship, professional development, and teacher preparation is the goal of a state seeking to increase quality educators of color and indigenous educators in Minnesota classrooms.

PELSB is not advocating to return to the limitations of licensure prior to Tiered Licensure. PELSB has actively worked to support the approval of alternative teacher preparation programs, provide trainings and supports through the licensure via portfolio process, increase mentorship, and advocates to expand access in other areas in Tiered Licensure (i.e. expand the bachelor's degree exemption).

At the core of any profession are the standards required to be an effective professional in that field. For teaching in Minnesota, those standards exist in statute and rule, and multiple pathways exist to ensure access for all types of teacher candidates. The only pathway that should not exist, the only pathway that threatens the status of teaching as a "profession", is a pathway that does not require meeting the same standards as all other teachers in the state.

Thank you for your consideration of this significant issue, and please reach out to PELSB for additional changes to Tiered Licensure that could forge additional pathways for more teachers and provide opportunities and supports to move up the tiers.

Sincerely,



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move to a Tier 3 license and another 760 would move to a Tier 3 upon program completion. See the 2021 Supply & Demand of Teachers in Minnesota, page 22, https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/Supply%20and%20Demand%202021_Final_tcm1113-463801.pdf.