

Minutes
EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Legislative Audit Commission
March 4, 2016

Members Present:

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
Representative Connie Bernardy
Senator Mary Kiffmeyer

Members Absent:

Senator Warren Limmer

Other Legislators Present:

Representative Sondra Erickson
Representative Clark Johnson
Representative Jenifer Loon
Representative Duane Quam
Senator Greg Clausen
Senator Susan Kent

Representative Rick Hansen called the Legislative Audit Commission Evaluation Subcommittee meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to release the evaluation, *Minnesota Teacher Licensure*.

Representative Hansen introduced Jim Nobles, Legislative Auditor, who gave a brief statement about the evaluation and introduced Judy Randall, the evaluation manager, to give a presentation. Ms. Randall said there are significant problems with Minnesota's teacher-licensure system, including (1) Minnesota laws use undefined and unclear terms, which are confusing, and the frequent law changes make the system complex; (2) the governance structure is confusing and results in decreased accountability and transparency for licensing decisions; and (3) problems with the entire implementation process, from submitting an application through appeals. Ms. Randall highlighted the following recommendations to the Legislature: (1) clarify Minnesota statutes to define terms and use them consistently; (2) consider a tiered licensing structure with clear expectations to ensure consistency and transparency; (3) consolidate teacher-licensure activities into one state agency; (4) clarify in statute whether the Board of Teaching (BOT) or the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is responsible for the various teacher-licensure activities; and (5) appropriate funding directly to BOT. Ms. Randall also mentioned the following recommendations: (1) MDE should update its licensure-application system to allow applicants to submit more complete information through the initial application form; (2) BOT and MDE should post clear and complete information on their websites regarding licensure requirements; (3) MDE should clearly state reasons for denying license applications in its licensure-denial letters; and (4) BOT should ensure its licensure-appeals process is consistent with the law.

Representative Hansen invited the agency representatives to address the subcommittee. Erin Doan, Board of Teaching Executive Director, thanked the Office of the Legislative Auditor staff for the detailed review of the Minnesota teacher-licensure system. Ms. Doan said the Board agrees with the key facts and findings of the report. She added that the Board is encouraged by this opportunity to adopt the recommendations of the audit to resolve many of the identified issues. Ms. Doan also said that the Board had begun implementation of key recommendations regarding rule clarity and the process for applicant appeal.

Hue Nguyen, Minnesota Department of Education Assistant Commissioner, also thanked Mr. Nobles and his staff for their evaluation of this complex and critical process. Ms. Nguyen said that MDE agrees with the findings and have taken steps to implement the changes. As part of this, she said MDE is looking at ways to streamline the online application system. She added that the department does not have resources to completely redo the system, so it is doing what it can with what it has. She also said that the department is updating its website to provide a list of licensure application types and clear definitions of the application types.

Mr. Nobles said there would be a subcommittee meeting the following Monday to review the list of suggested topics for evaluation. He also reminded the subcommittee that the *MnDOT Highway Project*

Selection evaluation would be released on March 14 and the *Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)* evaluation would be released on March 18. He also added that he was just beginning a follow-up review on the topic of human subjects in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Minnesota.

With no further business, Representative Hansen adjourned the meeting at 12:21 p.m.

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair

Shelly Watterud, Recording Secretary