



Minnesota Board of Teaching

Alternative Pathways to Teacher Preparation Report to the Legislature 2015

The Minnesota Board of Teaching is pleased to present this report in accordance with the requirement set forth in Minn. Stat. §122A.245, Subdivision 10. Specifically, the law provides:

The Board of Teaching must submit an interim report on the efficacy of this program to the policy and finance committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education by February 15, 2013, and a final report by February 15, 2015.

Initial Response to the Legislation

The legislation authorizing an alternative teacher preparation programs was enacted early in the 2011 legislative session. Governor Dayton signed the bill on March 7, 2011. The Board of Teaching (BOT) quickly began work in response to the legislation and quickly discovered that there were a number of misconceptions about the legislation. Specifically, many individuals and organizations erroneously believed that the legislation authorized the BOT to grant the two-year limited-term licenses to individuals through an application process directly to the BOT. As a result our initial efforts were focused on disseminating information about this new process which authorized the BOT to approve alternative teacher licensure programs. We sought to clarify that once the Board approved a program individuals could enroll in the program and become eligible for licensure upon successful completion of the approved program. Examples of this work include:

1. Collaboration with a reporter from Minnesota Public Radio to publish an article entitled [“FAQ: Minn.’s alternative teaching licensure legislation”](#)
2. Information sent to the members of the BOT’s standing advisory committee, called Standards & Rules.
3. Collaboration with the Educator Licensing division at the Minnesota Department of Education to publish a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

Targeted Development Work

The Board of Teaching quickly initiated a process to develop a process to receive applications for alternative preparation programs in accordance with the new law. Our approach was three-fold:

1. Conduct research and gather information from multiple sources
2. Engage Minnesota stakeholders in meaningful, ongoing dialogue
3. Solicit ongoing feedback from the Board of Teaching

Board of Teaching staff sought to leverage the experience and wisdom of other states and organizations. Our outreach efforts included:

- Analysis and dialogue with state officials from states with existing policies and infrastructure for alternative routes to licensure; among the states we examined most closely were Washington, California, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin.
- Analysis of research and data available from the [National Association for Alternative Certification](#) and [National Center for Education Information](#)
- Examination of policies and practices for charter school sponsors (now called authorizers) who have financial oversight of a school, to help us understand the accountability mechanisms we should implement for non-profit organizations to become teacher preparation programs under the new law; BOT staff outreach included targeted dialogue with staff in MDE’s Charter School division as well as staff from the Charter School Partners organization.
- Stakeholder Engagement: The Board of Teaching relied heavily on our standing advisory committee, called Standards & Rules, throughout the development process.
- Board of Teaching input was integral throughout the process.

Final Board of Teaching Action

On January 13, 2012, the Board of Teaching adopted the guidelines for the approval of alternative route providers. The adopted guidelines were posted on the Board of Teaching website following the meeting and have been available online since January 2012. Staff members in Governor Dayton's office were also notified in advance of the Board's adoption of the guidelines. The guidelines are available on the [Board of Teaching website](#).

Status of Alternative Pathways

As of 2015, Minnesota has one alternative pathway to teacher education: Teach for America, partnered with the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (TFA/UMN).

As the regulatory body that will take action on applications that are received, the Board is not able to actively recruit or coach entities through the application process. However, Board of Teaching staff has revised the Alternative Pathways application and continue to be available to answer questions and facilitate the application process.

Board of Teaching staff has also worked with Career Changers website to ensure accurate and helpful information regarding alternative options within teacher education in Minnesota.

Teach For America-University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Completing their first academic year of operation, the TFA/UMN partnership enrolled 38 candidates in the inaugural cohort. These candidates include four licensure areas: Elementary/Bilingual Education (54%), Secondary Science (14%), Mathematics (12%), English as a Second Language (20%).

In their first Progress Report to the Board of Teaching on April 15, 2015, TFA/UMN gave detailed information regarding program design, mentorship structure, and initial candidate data.

Highlights of this report include:

1. Of the 38 initial candidates, two discontinued the program and one took a leave of absence.
2. Of the 35 remaining candidates, 37% are persons of color.
3. Of the 35 remaining candidates, one did not pass required Minnesota exams.
4. Three candidates' contracts were not renewed for the second year of the program.

TFA/UMN included an overview of their program evaluation data at this point, including a partnership with Minnesota Evaluation Studies Institute (a program evaluation department

within the College of Education and Human Development) doing a formal Program Review. TFA/UMN also addresses concerns regarding attrition and three contracts not renewed.

Future of Alternative Pathways

The application procedure and Board of Teaching staff infrastructure are fully operational and able to facilitate new applications for Alternative Pathways. Legislation in 2015 provided the opportunity for non-profit educational organizations to deliver teacher preparation without the partnership of a Minnesota school district or charter school, potentially providing an avenue for new entities interested in offering alternative pathways to teacher preparation.

Board of Teaching rule, effective January 1, 2016, formally expands options within traditional teacher education programs to identify and submit “non-conventional” programs. These programs also increase the diverse pathways to teacher preparation. As of 2014/2015, non-conventional programs include:

- Teacher Preparation Collaborative, Winona State University
- FasTrack, Bemidji State University
- DeLite, Bemidji State University
- District 916-Emotional Behavioral Disorder Partnership, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- Grow Your Own, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- Mandarin Immersion, St. Cloud State University
- Rochester Elementary Program, Winona State University
- Wyoming Special Education Natrona Program, Bemidji State University
- Twin Cities Consortium