



Guidance to Support Teacher Preparation Providers during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background

On March 15, 2020, Governor Walz ordered all Minnesota's public schools to temporarily close from March 18, 2020, through March 27, 2020, to provide time for the schools to adequately plan for continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ On March 25, 2020, Governor Walz directed public schools to implement a distance learning period beginning on March 30, 2020, through May 4, 2020.²

The statewide school closures and other measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic directly impact teacher candidate's ability to complete student teaching requirements, as well as other program requirements, as set forth in administrative rule.

The Board has responded to variances submitted on a case by case basis with the philosophy that preparation providers still needed to meet the intent of rule. For example, instead of outright waiving weeks of face-to-face student teaching, the Board required that student teaching be completed online or via distance learning or that there be supplemental experiences and assessments.

This guidance is intended to ensure the processing of licensure applications are as seamless as possible and that preparation providers understand where the Board has granted flexibility in requirements.

Note: All resolutions and discretionary variances approved for the 2020-2021 academic year are valid until August 31, 2021.

¹ Minn. Emerg. Exec. Order No. 20-02 (March 15, 2020), https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-02%20Final_tcm1055-423084.pdf.

² Minn. Emerg. Exec. Order No. 20-19 (March 25, 2020), https://mn.gov/governor/assets/2a.%20EO%2020-19%20FINAL%20SIGNED%20Filed_tcm1055-425019.pdf.

Impact on Future Self-Studies and Unit Site Visits

On December 11, 2020, the Board discussed the challenges facing providers, including the ability to maintain full compliance with all requirements and standards. The Board acknowledged that processes that are fully functional during non-pandemic times may have not had the same results during the pandemic. While the Board has made efforts to grant flexibility to providers during this unprecedented time by not enforcing particular rules as detailed in the following sections, the Board acknowledges that some providers still may not be able to achieve full compliance during the pandemic. Future review teams will be encouraged to acknowledge the barriers that providers faced during the pandemic.

PELSB encourages providers to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic within their self-study, including documenting all efforts to meet requirements (especially in circumstances where the provider is not able to fully comply). For example, within the introduction of the self-study, providers should include an overview of the unit's response to COVID-19. In addition to that introduction, providers should plan on having a separate COVID-19 section for each standard to describe changes made during the pandemic.

Clinical Experiences Aligned to Scope and Content

Unit rules and the teacher standards require that candidates have experiences aligned to the scope and content of the licensure area sought.

Minn. R. 8705.1000, subpart 3(B). The unit has a process to assure that programs provide and require experiences in the field aligned to the scope and content of the licensure field sought;

Minn. R. 8705.1000 subpart 3(G). For initial licensure, each program requires a student teaching period of a minimum of 12 continuous weeks, full time, face-to-face, which could be split into two placements, and in compliance with program-specific field experience and student teaching requirements set forth in parts 8705.2000 to 8705.2600 and parts 8710.3000 to 8710.8080;

On November 13, 2020, the Board adopted resolutions to support candidates completing programs in the 2020-2021 academic year:

- [Candidates completing clinical experiences across the scope of the license for programs with two levels](#)
- [Candidates completing clinical experiences across the scope of the license for programs with three levels](#)
- [Academic and Behavioral Strategist candidates completing clinical experiences](#)

Each of the resolutions allows for greater flexibility in placing teacher candidates in clinical experiences. PELSB strongly encourages providers to review the resolutions in full.

Student teaching for candidates seeking initial licensure

State regulations require that a teacher candidate enrolled in a teacher preparation program for initial licensure complete 12 continuous weeks of face-to-face student teaching.

Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, subpart 3G. For initial licensure, each program requires a student teaching period of a minimum of 12 continuous weeks, full time, face-to-face, which could be split into two placements, and in compliance with program-specific field experience and student teaching requirements set forth in parts 8705.2000 to 8705.2600 and parts 8710.3000 to 8710.8080.

On August 14, 2020, the Board adopted a resolution to not enforce “face-to-face” and “continuous” for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Moving forward, providers seeking a variance of this rule for 12 weeks of full time student teaching should include a description of how it will effectively assess candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions.

Spring 2020 variance requests approved

Initial Licensure Student Teaching

The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) has approved the following options for candidates hoping to complete their student teaching this spring:

- 10 weeks or more of face-to-face student teaching;
- 6 - 9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by online or distance learning student teaching for a total of 10 weeks of student teaching (weeks do not have to be continuous);
- 6-9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by replacement experiences or verification of preparedness (weeks do not have to be continuous).
- 5 weeks or fewer of face-to-face student teaching plus a continuation of student teaching online or through distance learning, and additional experiences as put forth in specific requests.
- The Board has also approved variances for individual providers.

For more information, please refer to appendix A.

Parent and Family Education

Candidates seeking preparation to teach Parent and Family Education must complete at least one hundred (100) field experience hours.

Minnesota Rule 8710.3100, subpart 3 (D)(5). A teacher of parent and family education must understand adult development and how to apply the standards of effective practice in teaching adult students through a series of formal observations and directed instructional experiences with adults participating in early childhood and family education programs totaling at least 100 hours and including two written evaluations by supervisors.

At its special meeting on April 3, 2020, the Board acted to approve the variance request from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities for its 8 Parent and Family Education candidates.

On April 17, 2020, the Board approved Concordia University St. Paul’s variance request for the one Parent and Family Education candidate.

Required pipeline list documentation:

To help with the licensure process, PELSB is asking that teacher preparation providers submit a pipeline candidate list of all teacher candidates who had modified student teaching experiences in spring 2020. This pipeline list must be submitted to PELSB prior to recommending candidates for licensure.

PELSB has created a [pipeline template](#) to help with this process. Note that tabs have been created to separate candidates who have completed 10 weeks of face-to-face student teaching, 6-9 weeks, fewer than 6 weeks, and middle level endorsements. Once the pipeline list is completed, please save the file with your institution's name and email it to Emily Busta at emily.busta@state.mn.us. Please reach out to Emily with any questions.

Pipeline lists are not required for licensure for teacher preparation programs that received variances for the 2020-2021 school year.

2020-2021 Academic Year Resolution and Approved Variance Requests

Initial licensure student teaching

On August 14, 2020, the Board adopted a [resolution](#) to suspend the enforcement that student teaching be "face-to-face" and "continuous."

Candidates enrolled in initial licensure program and middle level endorsement

On September 18, 2020, the Board approved a request from Bemidji State for four candidates completing both initial licensure student teaching and middle level endorsement student teaching that planning weeks can count towards the 12 weeks of student teaching.

Candidates serving as teacher of record

On October 9, 2020, the Board approved a request from St. Mary's University for one candidate to complete student teaching on a Tier 2 license with an assignment of .4 in the licensure area sought, .4 in another licensure area, and an additional .2 in the licensure area sought with a professionally licensed cooperating teacher for 20 weeks.

Field experience hours for candidates seeking initial licensure

State regulations require each candidate for initial licensure to complete at least 100 hours of field experience hours prior to student teaching.

Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, Subpart 3(G). For initial licensure, each program requires ... compliance with program-specific field experience and student teaching requirements set forth in parts 8705.2000 to 8705.2600 and parts 8710.3000 to 8710.8080.

In the spring of 2020, the Board allowed for hours beyond the 12 full time weeks of student teaching to count towards the 100 required field experience hours. That remains the case for the 2020-2021 school year.

You may **contact board staff** to discuss a variance you would like to seek if:

- your candidates are student teaching in the fall of 2020 or spring of 2021 and candidates CANNOT make up the field experience hours through virtual learning field experiences or added experiences later in the program.
- you would like to request approval for **alternatives to field experience hours** including: case studies, simulated experiences, tutoring outside of a school setting, , supporting children with online or distance learning (not under the direction of the school), supplemental replacement experiences, or a competency-based evaluation system.

Variance requests approved:

On April 17, 2020, the Board approved Winona State University's variance request to authorize replacement experiences as set forth in the request for up to thirty hours of field experience for candidates completing student teaching for both an initial license and middle level endorsement in the fall of 2020.

The Board approved variances for experiences in non-school settings to count towards field experience hours with the following conditions:

- the candidate work with groups of students
- a licensed individual with experience and a license aligned to the scope of the field experience oversee the experience and have regular interaction with the candidate
- this type of placement should be limited to 50 of the required 100 hours for initial licensure
- the variance should only be for the 2020-2021 school year

Following the August 28 Board action, the Board created [a form](#) to facilitate similar variances for field experiences in non-school settings. For more information, refer to Appendix C.

On September 18, the Board approved one variance from Hamline University for the following experience to count towards field experience hours:

- microteaching with the condition that the candidate be facilitating the instruction (15 hours maximum); hours being a student of microteaching does not count towards field experience hours
- interviews with practicing teachers and case studies (10 hours maximum)

- expires August 31, 2021

On November 13, 2020, the Board approved a variance from St. Catherine University for new, replacement experiences to count towards up to 50 of the 100 required field experience hours with the caveat that there be no more than 15 hours in any one area and a prioritization for:

- (1) Experiences with students in schools, where an appropriately licensed faculty member is able to provide the candidate with feedback
- (2) Transcript analysis
- (3) Teaching other candidates, where only a candidate's own planning, teaching, and reflection may count toward the hours
- (4) Case studies

On January 8, 2021, the Board approved a variance request from Bethel University to replace up to 50 of the 100 required field experience hours with the condition that there be no more than 15 hours for any single type of replacement experience.

On February 12, 2021, the Board approved a variance request from Winona State University for Elementary Education candidates to use simulated experiences via Pearson's My Virtual Child as alternative activities for a total of 10 field experience hours for each impacted teacher candidate. The variance was approved through June 2021 as requested.

Required documentation:

Providers must maintain records demonstrating how candidates met the intent of the standard through the variance granted.

Field experiences for candidates seeking additional licensure

State regulations require that programs determine the length of field experiences for additional license areas and provide a written evaluation.

Minnesota Rule 8705.2100, subpart 2 (D)(4)(f). For licenses added to an initial license, the program may determine the length of field experiences needed for each candidate to demonstrate program standards necessary to be recommended for an additional license as follows: i. the program must provide field experiences aligned to the scope of the licensure sought; ii. the length of field experience may vary depending on the prior academic preparation and experiences of each candidate; and iii. a written evaluation by a supervisor is required.

If any of the following are true, you do **NOT** need to seek a variance:

- Evaluated field experiences for additional license areas *may* occur in a virtual setting without a variance.
- Since the provider determines the length of the field experience, providers do NOT need to seek a variance for a shortened experience at this time.

There must be an evaluated experience aligned to the scope and content of the new license sought.

Variance requests approved:

State regulations require that candidates complete clinical experiences aligned to the scope and the content of the license sought.

Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, subpart 3 (B). The unit has a process to assure that programs provide and require experiences in the field aligned to the scope and content of the licensure field sought.

On October 9, 2020, PELSB approved a request from Southwest Minnesota State University for three Reading licensure candidates to complete middle and high school level field experiences with English as Second Language teachers in ESL assignments with the conditions that the placements have deliberate focus on teaching reading, that someone with a Reading license have active participation in the field experiences (even if virtually), and the candidate receive feedback on at least 2 observations per placement form the licensed Reading teacher.

Student teaching for candidates seeking a middle level endorsement

Many candidates have not completed any face-to-face student teaching yet in the scope and content of the endorsement sought.

Minnesota Rule 8705.2100, subpart 2 (D)(4)(g). For middle level endorsement fields, the program requires a student teaching period of a minimum of four continuous weeks, full time, face-to-face.

Variance requests approved:

The Board approved variance requests from a number of providers authorizing student teaching continue online or through a distance learning format for candidates seeking middle level endorsements in the spring of 2020.

For a list of providers with approved variances, refer to Appendix B.

2020-2021 Resolution:

On August 14, 2020, the Board adopted a resolution to not enforce “face-to-face” and “continuous” for the 2020-2021 academic year. Student teaching for middle level endorsements may take place in a face-to-face, hybrid, distance learning setting, or combination of those settings (if there is a shift mid-placement).

Required pipeline list documentation:

To help with the licensure process, PELSB is asking that teacher preparation providers submit a pipeline candidate list of all teacher candidates who had modified student teaching experiences in spring 2020. This pipeline list must be submitted to PELSB prior to recommending candidates for licensure.

PELSB has created a [pipeline template](#) to help with this process. Note that tabs have been created to separate candidates who have completed 10 weeks of face-to-face student teaching, 6-9 weeks, fewer than 6 weeks, and middle level endorsements. Once the pipeline list is completed, please save the file with your institution’s name and email it to Emily Busta at emily.busta@state.mn.us. Please reach out to Emily with any questions.

Pipeline lists are not required for licensure for teacher preparation programs that received variances for the 2020-2021 school year.

Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) for candidates seeking initial licensure

State regulations require that a teacher candidate enrolled in a teacher preparation program for initial licensure complete a state-approved teacher preparation assessment during student teaching.

Minnesota Rule 8705.2100, subpart 2 (d)(4)(e). Evaluation of candidates seeking an initial teaching license includes the completion of the state-approved teacher performance assessment during the student teaching placement

While some candidates have completed the edTPA, are on track to complete the edTPA, or have finished the first or second task of the edTPA, many providers have indicated that completing the edTPA will be a challenge, if not impossible, for many candidates. If candidates are able to complete the edTPA based on a face-to-face or online teaching setting, no variance is needed.

Moving forward, for providers seeking a variance of this rule should include which assessment data may be used in place of the edTPA for the purpose of program evaluation.

Spring 2020 Variance requests approved:

For all providers who sought a variance from the teacher performance assessment for student teachers in the spring of 2020, including those that requested a full waiver, the Board approved a variance allowing providers to complete a locally-determined, summative teacher performance assessment including the components of planning, instruction, and assessment. The provider must use the assessment to give candidates feedback on each component due to the loss of feedback in the face-to-face classroom.

Documentation required:

Candidate files must have evidence that a locally-determined, summative teacher performance assessment with the components of planning, instruction, and assessment was completed for candidates who would have been required to take the edTPA but did not based on a variance granted.

New PERCA submissions with the details of the locally-determined, summative teacher performance assessment are NOT required. During on-site reviews, reviewers may ask for evidence of what was completed.

Other:

If a provider has required candidates to complete a practice edTPA or teacher performance assessment prior to student teaching, that does not meet the allowances of this variance.

Each PERCA report is reviewed individually by the Program Review Panel and considers the narrative report aligned with established data. Based on the disruption to edTPA scores in the spring of 2020, PELSB staff will recommend no program be given a status of “continuing approval with continuous improvement focus” based solely on low edTPA scores or no edTPA scores in the spring of 2020. However, a program may be approved with a continuous improvement focus based on longitudinal edTPA data.

2020-2021 Academic Year Resolution

On August 14, 2020, the Board adopted a [resolution](#) to suspend the enforcement of the board-adopted teacher performance assessment.

On October 9, 2020, the Board approved a discretionary variance request from Minnesota State University Mankato for one candidate. The candidate was unable to complete edTPA during student teaching in the fall of 2019. The provider assured that upon the approval of this variance, the candidate would “pass” student teaching and be recommended for licensure this academic year.

PERCA Submissions and Changes to Approved Program

Clinical experiences for candidates in the spring of 2020 may have been different from what is in the Board-approved program in the Educator Preparation Program Application System (EPPAS). Additionally, from the spring of 2020 through the 2020-21 academic year, providers may need to adjust assessments of teacher standards from field-based.

Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, 9.I states that “the unit leader is responsible for administering all licensure programs as approved and for notifying the board of any changes to approved programs through the biennial program reporting process.”

Variance requests approved:

The Board approved a variance that waives the requirement that unit leaders report program changes related to clinical experiences impacted by on COVID-19 disruptions in the spring of 2020.³ The Board later extended this waiver through the summer of 2020.⁴ As such, providers **should not** submit requests for variance of this rule.

On May 22, 2020, the Board extended variances of this rule through the summer of 2020.

On August 14, 2020, the Board adopted a resolution to not enforce 8705.1000, 9I for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Documentation required:

Individual candidate files must include individual’s clinical experiences. During on-site reviews, reviewers may ask to review candidate files from candidates enrolled in the spring of 2020 through the spring of 2021. The Board may also reach out for additional information if there are concerns.

The Board notes that it is not waiving any of the teacher standards or standards related to clinical experience by waiving this rule. By waiving this rule, providers have flexibility to shift clinical experiences and to determine how to meet standards amidst school disruptions. Documentation should make it clear that all teacher standards and clinical experience standards are still met.

2020 Resolution Approved

On October 9, 2020, the Board adopted a resolution to not enforce the submission of PERCAs for programs with continuing approval status, expiring June 30, 2021. This resolution does not apply to programs with required interim reports or programs on probation.

³ Approved on April 10, 2020.

⁴ Approved on May 22, 2020.

Applying for licensure

PELSB is working hard to ensure a seamless licensure application process for candidates applying for licensure during COVID-19.

Frequently Asked Questions related to licensure can be found on page 20.

Information for certifying officers:

Due to the increase in teleworking, PELSB has made accommodations to the application process for certifying officers. For the foreseeable future, PELSB has implemented the following changes:

For Candidates Completing in Spring 2020

1. Completion of a candidate pipeline list must be submitted to PELSB prior to recommending candidates for licensure. PELSB will be checking this list to make sure individuals are eligible for licensure. See “Required pipeline list documentation” on pages 7 and 11 for further instructions.
2. If the candidate completed fewer than 12 weeks of student teaching, PELSB has created a new “Verification of Completion of a State Approved Licensure Program” form (Section 6A) for use. Section 6A must include the candidate’s signature. This signature can be digital. For candidates that have completed 10-11 weeks of student teaching, the certifying officer should complete the Student Teaching and License Program Completed sections only. For candidates that have completed fewer than 10 weeks of student teaching, the certifying officer should complete the Student Teaching, Supplemental Activities and License Program Completed sections.
3. All other application process steps should be followed as outlined below.

For Candidates Completing in the 2020-2021 School Year

1. PELSB is able to mail out fingerprint cards to first-time licensure candidates. Directions on how candidates should request a fingerprint card are below.
2. Certifying officers are able to use electronic signatures on the “Verification of Completion of a State Approved Licensure Program” (Section 6) form. Please use the form provided in Appendix C when using e-signatures.
3. If the candidate completed 12 weeks or more of student teaching (including distance learning), use Section 6 of the “Verification of Completion of a State Approved Licensure Program” to recommend your candidates. Please include the specific dates of student teaching (MM/DD/YYYY) on the form.
4. PELSB will be accepting unofficial transcripts as part of the application process. Certifying officers should compile the transcripts necessary for licensure and email them to their licensure candidates. This email should also include the completed verification (Section 6) form. The candidate will be responsible for printing the email you send to them and include it in the application packet. This ensures that you, the certifying officer, have completed the necessary documentation. **Please do not send PELSB transcripts or verification forms separately.**
5. Finally, the steps below should be shared with your teacher candidates to ensure compliance with the application process.

Content and pedagogy testing:

Initial licensure applicants who have successfully completed testing will complete a Tier 3 application. Applicants who are adding a licensure field will complete a Tier 3 or Tier 4 application.

For candidates who have not yet taken or passed the required examinations, a Tier 2 license may be available if they have a job offer with a Minnesota public or charter school. If they do not currently have a job offer, they can apply for a short call substitute teaching license.

Please note that the Conditional One-Year Tier 3 license is not currently available. This conditional license was legislatively approved to be granted to applicants who applied for licensure prior to October 31, 2020. Additional legislation would need to be approved for this license to be available again.

Applications for teacher licensure:

Please send the completed licensure applications to PELSB in one packet. Incomplete applications will cause a delay in processing your license. It is the licensure candidate's responsibility to ensure all materials are included in the application. NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 situation, PELSB has slightly changed the procedures for submitting materials. Please follow these instructions:

- Initial licensure candidates may need to request a fingerprint card directly from PELSB. To request a fingerprint card, please have the applicant [email](#) PELSB with their name and address and put "Fingerprint Card Request" in the subject line.
- Licensure candidates will need to work with their teacher preparation program to obtain all necessary transcripts to submit for licensure.
- Licensure candidates must complete their portion of the application. This includes Sections 1-5 for all applications. Sections 7-8 are not required for initial applicants.
- Licensure candidates must work with their teacher preparation provider to complete Section 6, "Verification of Completion of a State Approved Program". **Note: Your preparation provider may have additional steps you need to complete before they will recommend you for licensure.**
- Certifying officers should email the licensure candidate the completed Section 6 along with their transcripts. PELSB will accept unofficial transcripts for candidates who apply during COVID-19.
- Licensure candidates must print the email, the transcripts and Section 6 that are received from the certifying officer. **Transcripts that are submitted without the email indicating they have been forwarded from the teacher preparation provider will not be accepted.**
- Tier 2 licensure candidates who have been offered a teaching position will need to work with their Minnesota school district or charter school to complete Section 8, "District Verification for a Tier 2 License". For positions that start in the 2020-2021 school year, you can submit your licensure application any time after July 1.
- Once the application packet is complete, please send application, fingerprint card and fee to:

PELSB
1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Suite 222
St. Paul, MN 55108

Applications for administrative licenses:

Initial licensure applicants that have never held a file folder number (FFN) with PELSB can apply for their license [online](#). Applicants who currently have a Minnesota file folder number will complete a paper [Application for Administrative License](#).

Please send only completed licensure applications to PELSB. Incomplete applications will cause a delay in processing your license. It is the licensure candidate's responsibility to ensure all materials are

included in the application. NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 situation, PELSB has slightly changed the procedures for submitting materials. Please follow these instructions:

- Initial licensure candidates (never had a Minnesota FFN) may need to request a fingerprint card directly from PELSB. The request for a fingerprint card can be done through the online licensure application.
- Licensure candidates will need to work with their administrative preparation program to obtain all necessary transcripts to submit for licensure.
- Licensure candidates must complete their portion of the application. This includes Sections 1-5. Section 6 will need to be signed by your administrative preparation program. Section 8 will need to be signed by the school district. Applicants completing the application online should follow their checkoff list.
- Licensure candidates must work with their administrative preparation provider to complete Section 6, "Verification of Completion of a State Approved Program." **Note: Your preparation provider may have additional steps you need to complete before they will recommend you for licensure.**
- Certifying officers: PELSB will accept electronic signatures for Section 6. Please use the form provided in Appendix C: Verification of Completion of a State-approved Program.
- Certifying officers should email the licensure candidate the completed Section 6 along with their transcripts. For administrative licensure, please include bachelor's degree, master's degree AND administrative preparation transcripts. PELSB needs to see 60 credits beyond a bachelor's degree to issue an administrative license. PELSB will accept unofficial transcripts for candidates who apply during COVID-19.
- Licensure candidates must print the email, the transcripts and Section 6 that are received from the certifying officer. **Transcripts that are submitted without the email indicating they have been forwarded from the administrative preparation provider will not be accepted.**
- Licensure candidates must work with their school district to complete Section 8. An authorized official at the school must verify three years of teaching experience.
- Once the application packet is complete, please send application, fingerprint card (if applicable) and fee to:

PELSB
1021 Bandana Blvd. E, Suite 222
St. Paul, MN 55108

Appendix A: Initial Licensure Student Teaching

On March 27, 2020, the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) has approved the following options for candidates hoping to complete their student teaching this spring:

- 10 weeks or more of face-to-face student teaching;
- 6 - 9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by online or distance learning student teaching for a total of 10 weeks of student teaching (weeks do not have to be continuous);
- 6-9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by replacement experiences or verification of preparedness (weeks do not have to be continuous).

Conditions:

- All variances are limited to candidates completing student teaching in the spring of 2020.
- Providers must document for each candidate the following:
 - Weeks of face-to-face student teaching completed;
 - Weeks of student teaching completed through an online or distance learning format (if applicable);
 - Replacement experiences (if applicable); and
 - Other verification of preparedness (if applicable).
- Providers must have evidence demonstrating that candidates are prepared to teach prior to recommending them for licensure.

The Board approved the discretionary variances above for the following institutions:

- *Augsburg University*
- *Bemidji State University*
- *Bethany Lutheran College*
- *Bethel University*
- *College of St. Benedict and St. John's University*
- *College of St. Scholastica*
- *Concordia College Moorhead*
- *Concordia University, St. Paul*
- *Crown College*
- *Gustavus Adolphus College*
- *Hamline University*
- *Martin Luther College*
- *Metropolitan State University*
- *Minnesota State University Mankato*
- *Minnesota State University Moorhead*
- *North Central University*
- *Southwest Minnesota State University*
- *St. Catherine University*
- *St. Cloud State University*
- *St. Mary's University of Minnesota*
- *St. Olaf College*
- *University of Minnesota Crookston*
- *University of Minnesota, Duluth*
- *University of Minnesota Morris*
- *University of Minnesota Twin Cities*
- *University of Northwestern*
- *University of St. Thomas*
- *Walden University*
- *Winona State University*

The Board approved the following variances for candidates with fewer than 6 weeks of face-to-face student teaching.

On April 3, 2020, the Board approved discretionary variance requests for Bethel University, St. Catherine University, St. Mary's University of Minnesota, and St. Olaf College based on a combination of face-to-face student teaching, continuation of online student teaching, and additional experiences as put forward in the variance requests as follows:

- *Bethel University* (for 19 candidates). Candidates have completed three weeks of face-to-face student teaching and will continue student teaching in an online or distance learning format for at least seven additional weeks. Additionally, the provider will create alternative assignments to ensure candidates are prepared to teach.
- *St. Catherine University* (for 4 candidates). Candidates completed five weeks of face-to-face student teaching. Candidates will complete another five to nine weeks of student teaching in an online or distance learning format. The provider will have supports and evaluations for candidates during the student teaching experience. The provider will also have alternative learning experiences.
- *St. Mary's University of Minnesota* (for 1 candidate). The candidate has completed 3 weeks of face-to-face student teaching. The candidate will continue to work with the cooperating teacher for the remainder of the school year to plan and provide online instruction. The candidate has years of experience as an instructional coach. The provider has created alternative learning experiences as well.
- *St. Olaf* (For 16 candidates). Four candidates completed four weeks of face-to-face student teaching and twelve candidates completed five weeks of face-to-face student teaching. Candidates will complete, including online or distance learning, at least ten weeks of student teaching. Candidates completed robust practicum experiences. The provider will use various assessments to verify competencies have been met.

On April 3, 2020, the Board approved the variance from *Walden University* as written for it 27 candidates. Candidates completed three weeks of face-to-face student teaching. Additionally, candidates will complete at least seven weeks of simulated student teaching (videos, avatars (four weeks) and then flexible (three weeks).

On April 10, 2020, the Board approved the variance requests from the Gustavus Adolphus College, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and University of St. Thomas to authorize a combination of face-to-face student teaching, online or distance learning student teaching, and additional experiences as set forth in each variance request:

- *Gustavus Adolphus College* (for 24 candidates). Gustavus Adolphus College provided additional information about supplemental activities that would occur in the spring of 2020 to make up for the missed face-to-face experiences. Twenty-four candidates completed five weeks of face-to-face student teaching. Candidates will continue student teaching online for at least five additional weeks. The provider will have supports and evaluations for candidates during the online student teaching experience.
- *University of Minnesota, Twin Cities* (for 52 candidates)
 - One K-12 Spanish candidate has had twelve official days of face-to-face student teaching. This candidate is working as a long-term Spanish substitute teacher on a Tier 2 license and will continue to be supported by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor.
 - Eight Agricultural Education/Work-Based Learning candidates completed five weeks of face-to-face student teaching and all are continuing with the same placements through distance learning. Candidates will have an intensive three-day virtual course to make up for lost face-to-face experience. Candidates will log experiences related to the Standards of Effective Practice.
 - Twenty-two Math candidates completed four weeks of student teaching (equivalent to eight weeks when consider part-time practicum experiences). These candidates completed 180 field experience hours (note: only 100 hours are required). All candidates are continuing with same placements to ten weeks full-time through distance learning. Faculty are developing individualized plans to support and evaluate candidates for candidates who need it. Faculty will be providing online teaching opportunities as part of supplemental teaching course.

- Twenty candidates completed one full week of face-to-face student teaching in Communication, Arts, and Literature. All candidates are continuing their student teaching through distance learning or online student teaching for a total of 10 weeks full-time. Candidates completed an abundance of field experience hours and started in their student teaching placement in December 2019 part-time. Candidates will complete an additional portfolio assignment in their distance/online student teaching experience to verify candidate preparedness. The provider commits to offering support and evaluation once candidates have been hired in the fall. The provider also commits to offering classroom management and other specific new teacher professional development.
- One Elementary Education candidate completed four weeks of face-to-face student teaching (equivalent of nine weeks of full-time student teaching when including part-time practicum experiences). During 300+ hours in student teaching classroom, the candidate co-taught and co-planned Tuesday through Thursday for full-days for 15 weeks in the fall, during which the candidate had four formal observations with written and verbal feedback and one triad meeting. This candidate will have six additional weeks of virtual student teaching.
- *University of St. Thomas* (20 candidates). Twenty candidates have completed five weeks of face-to-face student teaching and will continue for five to seven weeks of distance learning student teaching. Candidates will complete supplemental assignments including reviewing case study documents and curated teaching videos, documenting virtual observations with the provider's observation protocol tool, and participating in virtual discussion of observations. All candidates completed more than the 100 required field experience hours and candidates received feedback during those experiences.

On April 10, 2020, the Board approved the variance request from *Hamline University* for eight teacher candidates to authorize a combination of face-to-face student teaching, online or distance learning student teaching, with the condition of providing additional assignments to support candidates from what they missed in having face-to-face student teaching. Candidates completed five weeks of face-to-face student teaching. Candidates completed one to two weeks of active collaboration with cooperating teacher to plan for distance learning. Additionally, candidates will complete five weeks of distance-learning instructional delivery.

On April 17, 2020 the Board approved the variance request from *Hamline University* for one teacher candidate to authorize two weeks of student teaching, two weeks of co-planning, and six weeks of distance learning student teaching in the spring and another four weeks of face-to-face student teaching in the fall.

Appendix B: Middle Level Endorsement Student Teaching

The Board acted to approve variances allowing for online or distance learning student teaching for candidates seeking middle level endorsements in the spring of 2020 for the following providers:

- *Augsburg University* (April 17, 2020)
- *Bemidji State University* (May 22, 2020)
- *Bethany Lutheran College* (April 3, 2020)
- *Bethel University* (April 3, 2020)
- *College of St. Benedict and St. John's University* (April 17, 2020)
- *Concordia College, Moorhead* (April 17, 2020)
- *Concordia University, St. Paul* (April 10, 2020)
- *North Central University* (April 10, 2020)
- *St. Catherine University* (April 3, 2020)
- *St. Mary's University of Minnesota* (April 10, 2020)
- *University of St. Thomas* (April 3, 2020)
- *Winona State University* (April 3, 2020)

On April 3, 2020, the Board acted to approve variances to allow for alternative experiences to prepare and evaluate candidates in the content and scope of the licensure area sought for candidates seeking to complete their program to obtain a middle level endorsement in the spring of 2020 from the following providers:

- *Bemidji State University*
- *College of St. Benedict and St. John's University*
- *Concordia University, St. Paul*
- *Crown College*
- *Minnesota State University, Mankato*
- *Minnesota State University, Moorhead*
- *St. Mary's University of Minnesota*
- *University of Minnesota, Morris*
- *University of Minnesota, Twin Cities*
- *University of Northwestern*

Appendix C: Field Experiences

The Board approved variances for experiences in non-school settings to count towards field experience hours with the following conditions:

- the candidate work with groups of students
- a licensed individual with experience and a license aligned to the scope of the field experience oversee the experience and have regular interaction with the candidate
- this type of placement should be limited to 50 of the required 100 hours for initial licensure
- the variance should only be for the 2020-2021 school year

Variances with the conditions listed above were approved for the following providers:

- Augsburg University (August 28, 2020)
- Minnesota State University, Moorhead (October 9, 2020)
- St. Cloud State University (December 11, 2020)
- University of St. Thomas (August 28, 2020)
- Bemidji State University (March 12, 2021)

Appendix D

Section 6: Verification of Completion of a State-Approved Licensure Program

THIS SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STATE-APPROVED LICENSURE PROGRAM CERTIFICATION OFFICER.

The state-approved teacher preparation program is from OUTSIDE of Minnesota AND (check all that apply):

- a regionally accredited program
- an alternative preparation program

The state-approved teacher preparation program is:

- a Minnesota state-approved program

Student Teaching/Practicum/Internship

Complete this section for all applicants that have 12 weeks or more of student teaching. *For special education experiences, include the ages/grade levels AND specific disability categories (with the severity levels: mild, moderate, severe, and/or profound) of students served in each placement. License issuance may be delayed without this information.*

School/Organization	Licensure Field(s)	Grade Level(s) Taught	Dates	
			Start	End

Licensure Program Completed

For special education licenses, please identify the specific disability category.

Subject/Licensure Field	Grade Levels	Date Preparation Program Completed

I confirm this information is correct.

Print Name of Certification Officer or Registrar		Title	
Email Address for Certification Officer or Registrar		Telephone Number for Certification Officer or Registrar	
Name of Institution		Location (city, state, ZIP code)	
Signature of Certification Officer or Registrar		Date	
Name		File Folder Number	

Section 6A: Verification of Completion of an Approved Licensure Program with Spring 2020 and 2020/2021 Student Teaching Variance

My signature indicates that I request a variance from the student teaching requirement and have completed either (1) ten weeks or more of student teaching or (2) nine weeks or fewer of student teaching and supplemental activities as indicated below by the teacher preparation program provider.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

THIS SECTION IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STATE-APPROVED LICENSURE PROGRAM CERTIFICATION OFFICER.

The state-approved teacher preparation program is from OUTSIDE of Minnesota AND (check all that apply):

- a regionally accredited program
- an alternative preparation program

The state-approved teacher preparation program is:

- a Minnesota state-approved program

Student Teaching/Practicum/Supplemental Activities

For Spring 2020 and 20/21 candidates, the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) has approved modifications for student teaching placements. The Board has authorized 10 weeks or more of student teaching as meeting requirements for initial licensure. For special education experiences, include the ages/grade levels AND specific disability categories (with the severity levels: mild, moderate, severe, and/or profound) of students served in each placement. License issuance may be delayed without this information.

School/Organization	Licensure Field(s)	Grade Level(s) Taught	Dates	
			Start	End

Supplemental Activities

For Spring 2020 and 20/21 candidates that have completed less than 10 weeks of student teaching, the Board has approved a variety of alternative means to meet student teaching requirements. The following supplemental activities have been used to meet student teaching requirements as approved by PELSB. Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avatar student teaching simulation
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Courses
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual discussions
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Studies | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments
<input type="checkbox"/> Observations
<input type="checkbox"/> Individualized development plans (IEP's)
<input type="checkbox"/> No supplemental activities |
|--|---|

Name

File Folder Number

Licensure Program Completed

For special education licenses, please identify the specific disability category.

Subject/Licensure Field	Grade Levels	Date Preparation Program Completed

I confirm this information is correct.

Print Name of Certification Officer or Registrar	Title	
Email Address for Certification Officer or Registrar	Telephone Number for Certification Officer or Registrar	
Name of Institution	Location (city, state, ZIP code)	
Signature of Certification Officer or Registrar		Date

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are certifying officers still able to send in applications on behalf of teacher candidates? Or are we required to email all information to the candidate?

A. If you are able to continue your normal process for sending licensure applications to PELSB, you are welcome to do so. PELSB is accommodated those who are unable to access their offices to prepare licensure applications.

Q. Can the email that includes transcripts come from someone other than the certifying officer at the teacher preparation provider?

A. Yes, if your department has someone who prepares licensure applications for the certifying officer, the assistant would be able to send the necessary documentation to candidates on behalf of the certifying officer. Remember to include the email with your application materials.

Q. Is PELSB offering accommodations to those who have not been able to complete testing due to COVID-19?

A. PELSB has been in close conversation with Pearson, the MTLE testing vendor, about reopening testing sites. Pearson owned testing sites will open at the end of May. [The MTLE website](#) will have the most up-to-date information on open test sites and registering for exams.

Q. Is PELSB still requiring first time candidates to be fingerprinted?

A. Per Minnesota Statute, fingerprinting is required for first time candidates. Some Minnesota counties have resumed fingerprinting; your teacher candidates should reach out to see if this is available in their area. Also, some third party sites may also be available for fingerprinting.

Q. Do applicants need to be fingerprinted in Minnesota?

A. No, applicants are not required to be fingerprinted in Minnesota if they are currently living elsewhere. However, the applicant must be fingerprinted on PELSB's fingerprint card (white card with sky-blue outline).

Q: How do I know if I need to submit a discretionary variance? Is one required?

A. Prior to submitting a discretionary variance for the summer of 2020, read this policy manual carefully and guidance on [COVID-19 Updates](#) page to see if one is required. If you are unsure whether a variance is required or what information needs to be included, please contact [Michelle Sandler](#).