

Minnesota Teacher Licensing Rule Changes

Gov. Tim Walz's Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) proposed amendments to the rules governing teacher licensure in Minnesota. These changes are expected to go into effect on July 1, 2024. Unfortunately, the approved changes politicize teacher training requirements, using language that is clearly ideological, not academic — from Critical Race Theory and identity politics to gender ideology.

The rule changes drew overwhelming public opposition from teachers, education specialists, parents, legal centers, and many others. There is concern these changes will exacerbate the teacher shortage, for example, by discouraging aspiring educators from entering the profession out of fear their religious liberties will be infringed upon.

Now, educators, parents, and teacher preparation providers are wondering how these changes will impact their profession, careers, and their children's classrooms, as ambiguity around enforcement and who all will be impacted remains.

Here's what you need to know about the rule changes to the Standards of Effective Practice.

- The licensure rule changes will require affected educators to:
 - o "affirm" student identities including sex and gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation and "incorporate" them into a learning environment;
 - o "understand" how "ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, deficit-based teaching, and white supremacy undermine pedagogical equity";
 - o "assess" their "biases" and "mitigate their own behavior to disrupt oppressive systems";

o "empower" learners "to be agents of social change to promote equity."

- The licensure rule changes do not determine or set state academic standards and benchmarks. Education standards are reviewed and revised by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- The licensure rule changes do not determine or set curriculum. Minnesota school boards select curriculum.



"I am looking to get a Minnesota teaching license. How do these changes affect me?"

The rule changes will require teacher candidates completing initial licensure programs in Minnesota to complete the newly amended Standards of Effective Practice through their teacher preparation program.

Aspiring educators may rethink pursuing this profession because of concerns about what they will have to embrace and demonstrate.

Even if the candidate plans on teaching at a private school or other non-public learning environment, the changes will impact what they have to demonstrate in order to be licensed through the state.



“I currently have a Minnesota teaching license. How do these changes affect me?”

The rule changes will require existing teachers seeking an initial Tier 3 license through the licensure via portfolio process (i.e., adult learners) to show how they met the amended Standards of Effective Practice through prior coursework, professional development, work and teaching experience, or other means.

Even if the teacher seeking an initial Tier 3 license via portfolio plans on teaching at a private school or other non-public learning environment, these changes will impact what they have to demonstrate in order to be licensed through the state.

The rule changes will not affect teachers who already hold a Tier 3 or Tier 4 license or who have already completed a teacher preparation program. They will also not affect teachers on a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license who don't intend to complete teacher preparation or licensure via the portfolio process. According to PELS, the changes to the Standards of Effective Practice are not a license renewal requirement; however, it remains unclear whether future interpretations by the board may indirectly embed them into cultural competency training, which is a renewal requirement.



“I am a teacher preparation provider. How do these changes affect me?”

The rule changes directly affect teacher preparation providers, as they will have to incorporate the modified Standards of Effective Practice into their coursework for teacher candidates to demonstrate as a pre-licensure requirement.



“I am a school board member. How do these changes affect me?”

The rule changes impact teacher licensure and do not impose changes to a school board's ongoing authority to include or exclude curriculum.



“I am a parent. How do these changes affect me?”

Parents will want to foster meaningful relationships with their children's teachers and encourage them to prioritize academic excellence. Parents should also exercise their (and their children's) rights, including reviewing curriculum. Under Minnesota state law (Sec. 120B.20), a school district must have a procedure in place for a parent to review the content of the instructional materials to be provided to their child and, if the parent objects, to make reasonable arrangements for alternative instruction.

Are you an aspiring educator, current educator or teacher preparation provider concerned these rule changes violate your personal, religious beliefs and convictions? Are you interested in a possible legal challenge in the courts (at no cost to you) to the Standards of Effective Practice for these or other reasons? Please reach out to our coalition for support using the contact information below.

Let's stand together to promote our common humanity and challenge imposition of an illiberal worldview that treats students and teachers as mere representatives of their race and gender groups instead of as unique, complex individuals.

Because this is new policy, these interpretations are based on the best information we have at this time. We will continue to monitor any changes or interpretations from PELS as they formally adopt these licensure rule changes.

Resources:



American Experiment

For articles and research on the rule changes, teacher licensing, and education in general. Visit AmericanExperiment.org and email info@AmericanExperiment.org for more information.



Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR)

For online podcasts, articles, and webinars; to join FAIR in Education; to discover the works of prominent FAIR advisors; for legal navigation; for pro-human DEI training; for reporting illiberal policy and conduct by institutions at FAIR Transparency. Visit FairForAll.org for more information.

- Twin Cities Chapter
For in-person gatherings of local pro-human Minnesotans; for presentations on pro-human policies to school leaders, civic leaders and parents; for newsletter updates on illiberal happenings in Minnesota. Email twincities@fairforall.org for more information.
 - Southern Minnesota Chapter
Contact Elizabeth Hanke at Elizabeth.Hanke@fairforall.org for more information.
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Minnesota Parents Alliance

For resources to get involved in your child's education, connect with parents in your district and statewide, and school board support. Visit MinnesotaParents.org and contact Cristine Trooien, executive director, at Cristine.Trooien@MinnesotaParents.org for more information.



True North Legal

For possible free legal assistance, for opt-out forms and information on parental rights, for education and training for school board members. Email info@truenorthlegal.org or visit truenorthlegal.org and click the tab "Request Help" for confidential legal assistance.



Upper Midwest Law Center

For aspiring teachers, Tier 3 licensure via portfolio applicants, and colleges that train teachers interested in becoming potential plaintiffs to challenge the final rule. Contact Doug Seaton or James Dickey at legal@umlc.org for more information and confidential inquiries at no cost to you. UMLC's letter-brief opposing the rule changes can be viewed [here](#).
