

FAQ

Minnesota's Tiered Teacher Licensure System and PELSB

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Q: What is the new, four-tiered licensure system?

A: The new licensure system was created by the legislature during the 2017 legislative session and has four tiers:

- **Tier 1:** A one-year license that is renewable up to three times. However, the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) can decide to grant additional renewals if the hiring district has a “good cause justification” for why they cannot find a Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 candidate to fill the position. Additionally, Tier 1 can be renewed without limitation if the class or course is in career and technical education or career pathways **or** if it is a shortage area as defined in [statute](#).
- **Tier 2:** A two-year license that can be renewed up to three times. However, PELSB can decide to grant additional renewals if the hiring district has a “good cause justification,” which must include why the applicant has not obtained a Tier 3 license.
- **Tier 3:** A three-year license that can be renewed an unlimited number of times.
- **Tier 4:** A five-year license that can be renewed an unlimited number of times.

The new system went into effect on July 1, 2018. However, due to the quick turnaround and tight timeline, PELSB authorized a one-year extension for all permissions, waivers, variances, and temporary licenses that went into effect on January 1, 2018. Importantly, the extension is only valid if the extended licensee/permission holder remains with the Minnesota traditional district or charter school who signed for them and also stays in the original licensure area requested.

Q: What are the qualifications to receive a license in each tier?

A: The qualifications for each tier are illustrated in the table on the following page.

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4
Degree Requirement	Bachelor's except CTE/ career pathways	Bachelor's except CTE/ career pathways	Bachelor's except CTE/career pathways	Bachelor's except CTE/career pathways
CTE Licensure Minimum Requirement	Associate's, professional certification or 5 years relevant work experience	Associate's, professional certification or 5 years relevant work experience	Associate's, professional certification or 5 years relevant work experience. Professional certification is determined by PELSB.	Associate's, professional certification or 5 years relevant work experience. Professional certification is determined by PELSB.
Education/ Professional Requirements		Enrolled in MN teacher-prep program or has master's degree or the completion of two of the coursework requirements below.	Passed required licensure exams (content & pedagogy), completed coursework (as defined).	ALL Tier 3 requirements & completion of teacher preparation program, 3 years teaching experience, passing score on all exams (incl. basic skills), most recent summative eval did not result in improvement plan.
Course Requirements		Two of the following: (1) 8 "upper division" credits in content, (2) field specific methods of training, (3) 2 years teaching in similar content in any state, (4) passing score on pedagogy & content, or (5) completion of approved teacher prep program.	One of the following: (1) completion state-approved teacher prep program, (2) completion of state-approved teacher prep program including student teaching. Student teaching waived if candidate has 2 years teaching experience, (3) submission of content-specific licensure portfolio, (4) out-of-state license in good standing & 2 years teaching experience, or (5) 3 years teaching experience in Tier 2 with evals that did not result in improvement plan.	Completion of Tier 3 coursework requirements.
Term	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 years
Renewal Conditions	Up to 3 times, with exceptions unless district shows good cause for additional renewals. Renewed without limitation if (1) class or course in CTE/career pathways or (2) shortage area as defined in statute.	Up to 3 times.	Unlimited	Unlimited
Limitations	Limited to content area, limited to district who requests, not a teacher as defined in 122A.40 NOR 179A.03.	Limited to content area, not a teacher as defined in 122A.40.	None	None
Mentorship & Evaluation	Must participate in mentorship & professional development. Must participate in evaluation.	Must participate in mentorship & evaluation program, including individual growth & development plan.	Must participate in mentorship & evaluation program, including individual growth & development plan.	Must participate in mentorship & evaluation program, including individual growth & development plan.

This table was created in January 2018 by Troy Haugen, CTE Coordinator for Lakes Country Service Cooperative. Used with permission.



Q: Why was the old teacher licensure system overhauled and changed to a tiered system?

A: In March 2016, the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) published a **report** on Minnesota's teacher licensure system. The report called the system "complex, unclear, and confusing," and found that the shared responsibility between the Minnesota Board of Teaching (BoT) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to issue teacher licenses made accountability diffuse and decision making unclear.

In response to the OLA report, the legislature created a **12-member legislative study group** on teacher licensure. The group met seven times from June to December 2016. In January 2017, they produced a **report** that, in alignment with the OLA report, recommended the legislature consolidate all teacher licensure activities into a single entity, as well as adopt a tiered licensure system.

Q: How is the new, tiered licensure system different from the old licensure system?

A: The new teacher licensure system, unlike the old one, creates a tiered system (see above) that has clear standards and entry points for licensure candidates with different experiences, training, and backgrounds. The new system also creates a streamlined pathway for educators to move through the tiers until they reach Tier 4. Finally, the new system also creates a minimum floor for teacher candidates.

Q: Who oversees the new teacher licensure system?

A: The new teacher licensure system is overseen by PELSB, which consists of 11 members who are appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. State law specifies that among 11 members there must be:

- Six teachers who are currently teaching in a Minnesota school or who were teaching at the time of the appointment, have at least five years of teaching experience, and were not serving in an administrative role at a school district or school when appointed. The six teachers must include:
 - One teacher in a charter school
 - One teacher from the seven-county metro area
 - One teacher from outside the seven-county metro area
 - One teacher from a related service category (speech-language pathology, psychologist, nurse, social worker, and counselor)
 - One special education teacher
 - One teacher from a teacher preparation program
- (List continued on the following page)



- One superintendent that alternates each term between a superintendent from the seven-county metro area and a superintendent from outside the metro area.
- One school district human resources director
- One administrator from a cooperative unit who oversees a special education program
- One principal that alternates each term between an elementary and secondary school principal
- One member of the public that may be a current or former school board member

Governor Dayton appointed the initial members on September 12, 2017. They are:

- Abdi Sabrie, Public Member
- Maggie Borman, Teacher Member
- Anne Krafthefer, Board Chair and Teacher Member
- James Miklausich, Principal Member
- Loy Woelbler, Superintendent Member
- Katie Groh de Avina, Human Resources Member
- Heidi Hahn, Administrator Member
- Anne Lindgren, Teacher Member
- Brian Rappe, Teacher Member
- Penelope Dupris, Teacher Member

A former PELSB teacher-member was Amy Hewett-Olatunde, but she was not confirmed by the Senate. The application for the position is currently [posted on the PELSB site](#).

Q: What are the responsibilities of PELSB?

A: PELSB is charged with overseeing and implementing teacher licensing for Minnesota, as well as developing the teacher's code of ethics, adopting rules to license public school teachers, adopting rules for and approving teacher preparation programs, issuing or denying license applications, and suspending, revoking, or denying a license based on qualifying grounds, and verification of district and charter school licensure compliance.

Q: How is PELSB different from the Board of Teaching?

A: Prior to the 2017 legislation, the responsibility of overseeing teacher licensure fell to the BoT and MDE. Specifically, the BoT was responsible for establishing standards for teacher preparation and licensure, as well disciplining licensed teachers who violate the teachers' code of ethics; whereas MDE was responsible for reviewing applications, deciding whether an applicant was qualified to receive a license and, if so, then issue the license.

The 2017 legislation dissolved the BoT and consolidated all of the responsibilities that had previously been split between the BoT and MDE to the purview of PELSB.