

# **Career and Technical Educator Licensing Advisory Task Force**

## **A Summary of the Legislative Report on Career and Technical Educator Licensing**

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### **Legislative Charge**

The 2016 legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to convene a Career and Technical Educator Licensing Advisory Task Force to review the current status of Career and Technical Education (CTE) educator licenses, provide recommendations on changes if deemed necessary, and provide recommendations for methods to increase access for districts to licensed CTE educators.<sup>1</sup>

### **Task Force Membership**

- Loy Woelber, representing the Board of Teaching (BoT);
- Jeralyn Jargo, representing colleges and universities offering board-approved teacher preparation programs;
- Jim Davnie, representing science, technology, engineering and math programs;
- Jessica Lipa, representing the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Administrators
- Callon Siebenahler, representing the Minnesota Association for Career and Technical Education
- Stephen Jones, representing secondary administrators (superintendent)
- Tonya Sconiers, representing secondary administrators (principal)
- Natalie Rasmussen, representing secondary administrators (assistant principal)
- Troy Haugen, representing other interested groups (Perkins consortium leader)
- Brad Greiman, representing other interested groups (University of Minnesota – Agriculture Education)

### **Background Information**

Full explanation of the background information can be found in the report submitted to the legislature. The full report can be found on the MDE website under Legislative Reports.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in the Laws of Minnesota 2016, chapter 189, article 24, section 23.

- CTE, like other teacher licenses, is increasingly relying on the special permission system (variances, non-licensed community experts, Etc.) to fill teaching positions.
- As the Office of Legislative Auditor's March 2016 report suggests, "The constantly changing, poorly defined, and conflicting teacher-licensure laws make it difficult for BoT board members, MDE licensing specialists, and teacher candidates to understand Minnesota's teacher license requirements" (p. 72).<sup>2</sup>
- CTE teachers, by their nature, have technical skills and abilities that are highly in-demand in the public sector, and oftentimes wages and benefits for those non-teaching positions far exceed those of traditional teaching contracts, thus creating strong competition for the talent pool.
- CTE teachers have more requirements for teacher preparation, licensure and program approval than most traditional teaching licenses.
- The requirement of a baccalaureate degree is not necessarily congruent with business and industry expectations in many CTE areas.
- The business model of traditional CTE teacher preparation programs is not always fiscally feasible for our four year regionally accredited colleges and universities.
- Although the opportunity exists for alternative providers to offer teacher preparation programs<sup>3</sup>, to date no eligible institutions have successfully navigated through the process to become a provider.
- The legislature has not necessarily invested in the basic infrastructure of our licensing system, either at the BoT or MDE, and this has further created levels of complexity that are difficult to navigate.

Due to the complexity of all of these issues, the CTE task force developed a list of six recommendations included in the full report to the legislature.

## Recommendations

**Preserve rule-making authority of the designated state agency to define minimum qualifications and prerequisites in Administrative Rule.** While basic frameworks for licensure, including the framework for a tiered licensure system (if that is determined to be the structure), may be necessary to legislate, specific qualifications or pre-requisites should be determined by education professionals in a non-partisan, unbiased format.

**Establish an ongoing Career and Technical Education Work Group.** Due to the significant level of complexity of CTE programming, an ongoing work group should be created in statute and allocated operating dollars for which the scope of work may include, but not limited to:

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<sup>2</sup> State of Minnesota. (2016). *Evaluation Report: Minnesota Teacher Licensure*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Office of the Legislative Auditor.

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Statute 122A.245 established the ability for alternative preparation providers to obtain organizational approval from the BoT, and set forth baseline criteria for eligible institutions.

- advising the licensure governance body(ies) in regards to licensure standards, licensure categories, approved licensure provider programs,
- address and advise the MDE, the system office of the Colleges and Universities of Minnesota State and the University of Minnesota on field issues and pipeline of CTE-licensed teachers,
- research and create regional licensure provider programs that include multiple delivery models,
- assure current and future licensure categories are congruent with current labor market conditions as well as business and industry standards and expectations.

**Consider alternative requirements to a baccalaureate degree for Career and Technical Education licenses.** Strong consideration needs to be given to the relevant value of a baccalaureate degree in the CTE licensure fields, particularly as defined in Minnesota Administrative Rules 8710.8000 through 8710.8080. A baccalaureate requirement is not congruent with all industry expectations (a premise for which CTE is founded), nor is it consistent with all credentialing requirements (minimum qualifications) for faculty at the postsecondary level. Due to the connection between CTE programs and business/industry expectations, and the potential talent pool for CTE teacher recruits, CTE teacher licensure and programs must consider avenues other than traditional baccalaureate preparation in determining quality teacher preparation. Alternative credentials to a baccalaureate degree may include:

- Recognized industry-related professional credential and verifiable work experience in content-specific field of licensure as a component of mastery of content-specific standards for licensure.
- Consider the Colleges and Universities of Minnesota State's defined credentialing requirements (minimum qualifications) as meeting the criteria of content-specific standards for licensure.

Suggested rule change language could include:

***Licensure requirements.*** A candidate for licensure as a teacher of technical education shall have completed either:

- A. at least a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university and a teacher preparation program approved under chapter 8705 including:
  - 1) the standards of effective practice under part 8710.2000;
  - 2) the core skills for teachers of career and technical education under part 8710.8000; and
  - 3) the standards under subpart 3; or

B. the successful completion of the following:

- 1) evidence of proficiency in the standards of effective practice under part 8710.2000 as well as the core skills for career and technical education under part 8710.8000 via portfolio, approved teacher preparation program, or approved teacher preparation program; and
- 2) evidence of proficiency in the standards under subpart 3 via portfolio, associate degree in content-specific field of licensure, industry-recognized professional credential in content-specific field of licensure, two thousand verifiable hours of work experience within the past five years in content-specific field of licensure or passing score on content-specific field of licensure exam, or
- 3) the ability to meet the Colleges and Universities of Minnesota State's minimum qualifications for faculty credentialing (as currently specified in Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board Policy 3.32 and Procedure 3.32.1) in content-specific field of licensure.

**Allow two-year accredited institutions of higher education to have the ability to offer content-related teacher preparation programs for Career and Technical Education licenses.** Amend Minnesota Administrative Rule 8705.0200, 8705.0300, and any other rule or statute to expand the definition of eligible postsecondary institutions to include regionally accredited two-year institutions of higher education to obtain unit approval for teacher preparation programs in Minnesota for content-related programs in technical areas.

- Minnesota Administrative Rule 8705.0200.Subpt 7: "Institution" means a regionally accredited associate (as it relates only to Career and Technical Education programs), baccalaureate or post baccalaureate degree-granting college or university.
- Minnesota Administrative Rule 8705.0300: Each Minnesota institution ~~granting baccalaureate degrees, post baccalaureate degrees, or both~~ requesting approval to prepare persons for teacher licensure shall be evaluated for compliance to unit standards according to parts 8705.1000 and 8705.1100 and shall be evaluated for compliance to program standards according to parts 8705.2000 to 8705.2600.

**Create incentives for institutions eligible for alternative preparation providers.** Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.245 allows a variety of institutions to obtain unit approval and program approval to become approved teacher preparation program providers; however there currently are none that have completed the process. The legislature and governor have shown commitment to increasing opportunities by funding grants (such as the Grow Your Own, Southwest Minnesota State University special education teacher education program and Southwest Minnesota State agriculture education licensure program) as well as directing the Colleges and Universities of Minnesota State to provide increased licensure options. However these continue to have one common thread; they are foundationally based in obtaining proficiency via college or university credit. Providing a financial incentive to alternative eligible institutions to cover the cost borne by obtaining unit approval and program development may entice entities to consider becoming an approved alternative teacher preparation provider, which is more economically feasible for both the provider and the teacher candidate.

**Provide adequate, sustainable funding for any resulting change or addition to state-agency scope of practice.**

Recognize that development of any new teacher preparation models or simple changes in the scope of practice for the MDE and/or BoT require an investment of resources beyond normal fiduciary allocations and allowances. Even simply by leveraging the technical expertise of, and opening up opportunity for two-year institutions to provide content-specific teacher preparation programs comes at an administrative cost to the governance body to whom works with and ultimately approves institutions (currently the BoT). Providing appropriate funding will help to incentivize and provide a more feasible business model for other institutions to develop and sustain CTE teacher preparation programs as a strategy to address the issues identified in the Office of Legislative Auditor's report. To expect these entities to operate an expanded scope of work without commensurate increase in budget will only work to frustrate and exacerbate the problems for which the Office of Legislative Auditor's report identified.

**Conclusion**

Having only one traditional pathway towards licensure has not proven to be a sustainable approach to increasing the teacher workforce in Minnesota. Additionally, relying only on high school graduates to enter those traditional pathways towards licensure is also proving to be insufficient. Multiple approaches to licensure, on-ramps for multiple talent pools, increased opportunities for mastery of required content, leveraging business and industry partnerships, aligning to workforce expectations, and nontraditional thinking on licensure is the only way to meet the needs of the next generation of potential recruits and grow the field in a way that assures quality programs for our future generations.

Frankly put, CTE teachers have the enormous responsibility of directly impacting the future of Minnesota's economic prosperity. CTE programs and courses lead to training for sixty-five percent of the jobs in the economy of today and the future. The sheer lack of talent pipeline of CTE teachers juxtaposed with the lack of teacher preparation programs, negative perception and lack of understanding of technical careers, and a lack of a clear and seamless pathway towards licensure from the field has created a crisis for CTE programs across Minnesota. Without changes in licensure that align to the framework for CTE programs, the downward trend of CTE program closure will continue, therefore ultimately negatively impacting students, the workforce skills gap, and the current and the future of our state and country.

The crisis status of the challenges we face in CTE calls for expedient and decisive strategy. The Career and Technical Educator Licensing Advisory Task Force believes that the proposed recommendations are integral levers for growing CTE in serving to strengthen our individual, family, local, state and national economic prosperity.