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MinnCAN's take: A guide for out-of-state teachers seeking licensure in Minnesota

Section 1. Why we made this guide + how you should use it

MinnCAN has long advocated to streamline the out-of-state teacher licensure system in Minnesota. However, despite positive progress—at both the Capitol and in the courtroom—teachers licensed in other states, who are seeking to teach in Minnesota, still face a process that can be frustrating and costly. This is especially true for educators licensed through alternative preparation programs.

To help you navigate this process and advocate for yourself, we have put together this document to detail what licenses candidates *should* qualify for, based on Minnesota state law. Your process will likely be unique due to your individual circumstances and the notorious inconsistency faced by many licensure applicants in Minnesota.

Additionally, despite the Legislature asking the Board of Teaching (BoT) to draft streamlined rules and procedures and to define what is required of incoming teachers for professional licenses, to date the BoT has failed to create an understandable process for teachers coming to Minnesota. Despite the BoT's inconsistency and failure to create clear expectations for teacher applicants, we attempt to provide detailed recommendations about how to navigate challenges you might face.

Keep in mind:

- We encourage you to ***apply for your full license as soon as possible***. New laws have created an opportunity for out-of-state teachers, but these opportunities could be ending since special interest groups are already working to roll back some of the changes.
- It is critical you ***be persistent, take notes and keep records of the steps you take***. Some educators have received their license simply because they were persistent throughout the application process. Save all written or email communications with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the BoT. Document phone conversations and meetings. A record of correspondence will likely be helpful during any official appeals process or as reference during conversations with different agencies.

If you get started on your application and face roadblocks or hurdles of any kind, we suggest you call or send an email to the following contacts, asking for help and clearly explaining what license you believe you qualify for, based on the tables below:

- MDE Licensing | p: (651) 582-8691 | e: mde.educator-licensing@state.mn.us
- Erin Doan, BoT executive director | p: (651) 582-8819 | e: erin.doan@state.mn.us

If you need further advocacy, contact: Daniel Sellers, MinnCAN executive director | p: (612) 280-8310 | e: daniel.sellers@minncan.org

Section 2. Nuts and bolts: The application process

Complete the online licensing application on the MDE website. Follow instructions to submit all supporting documentation. If the online application does not recognize your experiences or allow you to apply fully, you should **contact MDE and request a paper application**.

- MDE Licensing page: <http://goo.gl/vi9ojM>
- Direct link to MDE online licensing system: <https://goo.gl/WuTQfO>

Bottom Line: the law requires MDE issue a teaching license to an applicant who:

- a) has a bachelor’s degree; and
- b) has an teacher license through the successful completion of a teacher preparation program approved by the issuing state.

However, the *type* of license granted depends on demonstration of meeting other required criteria (see tables below). In almost all cases, MDE will issue one of the following items:

1. A full, standard renewable five-year professional license.
2. A one-year limited license or personnel variance, with renewal conditions. These can be renewed up to three times.
3. A two-year restricted license, with renewal conditions. There is no limit to the number of times these can be renewed.
4. A substitute teaching license.
5. A letter requesting additional documentation or explaining a licensure denial.

	Requirements	Evidence	Notes & links
A	Hold a bachelor’s degree.	Sealed undergraduate transcript from your college or university registrar	BoT might also require you hold a major or minor in the content area for the license you seek, but this is currently <i>not</i> in law, and should not be required.
B	Hold a current or expired out-of-state teacher license that required you to successfully complete a teacher preparation program approved by the issuing state. The out-of-state license must be in a “similar” content field and the grade level may be no more than two grade levels different than a Minnesota license.	MDE form titled, “ <i>Verification of completion of a state-approved licensure program,</i> ” which can be found here: http://bit.ly/1QrLPLh	While you are no longer required to hold a license that is the same as a Minnesota license, the BoT has not yet defined what constitutes a “similar” license (though they are required to do so by law).
C	Successfully complete all teacher licensure exams, including content,	For content and pedagogy, candidates must pass required MTLE exams.	MTLE exam information can be found here:

	pedagogy and skills examination in reading, writing and mathematics.	For the basic skills examinations, you must earn a passing score on a board-approved test, including the MTLE basic skills, ACT and/or SAT.	https://goo.gl/i81t3b Skills examinations “cut scores” and board approved tests: https://goo.gl/cheuuq
D	Successfully complete human relations preparation components.	Currently, you’re required to demonstrate completion of human relations work through completion of college coursework.	List of approved courses and Universities: http://bit.ly/1Q9akCy
E	Complete <i>one</i> of the following: 1) student teaching or equivalent experience; <u>or</u> 2) at least two years of teaching as the teacher of record in a similar licensure field.	Student teaching transcript or verification of employment including subjects and grades taught.	

If you have...	...and...	then...
A, B, C, D & E	(are not missing anything)	You are eligible for a full, standard renewable five-year professional license.
A, B, D & E	You have not successfully met the requirements for the basic skills examinations, but have completed all other testing requirements	<p>You are eligible for a limited license (renewable up to three times) to allow for you to complete the requirement.</p> <p>You are also eligible for a restricted license if you are currently employed with a Minnesota district or charter school. At the request of your employing school district or charter school, the BoT may issue you a restricted license. The restricted license is limited to the current subject or content matter you are employed to teach and limited to the district or charter school requesting the restricted license.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the board denies the request, it must provide a detailed response to the school administrator as to the reasons for the denial. • A restricted license is good for two years and there is no limit to how many times it can be renewed. • The BoT must inform the applicant of what steps need to be taken in order to remove the restriction.
A, C, D & E	You hold an out-of-state license that is more limited in the content field or grade levels than a similar Minnesota license (Part of B)	You are eligible for a restricted teaching license for only the content field or grade levels specified in your out-of-state license. There is no limit to how many times this license can be renewed.

A, B, C & D	You have not completed E (field-specific methods, student teaching, or equivalent experience nor do you have two years experience as the teacher of record in a similar licensure field).	The BoT must issue you a one-year temporary teaching license, which can be renewed up to three times, while you work towards completing E. After two years as the teacher of record under a temporary teaching license, you are eligible for your professional license (since you would have then met the requirement of two years experience as the teacher of record).
A, B & E	Are missing either C and/or D (teacher licensure exams and/or human relations components)	You are eligible for a limited license (renewable up to three times) to allow for you complete the requirement.
A + teaching experience	You do not have a standard license that required you to successfully complete a teacher preparation program	Your best path to a license is likely through the portfolio review process, which you can learn about here: http://goo.gl/h1x9b4 .

Section 3. Appealing your licensure determination

If you were not given the right license, you must take action within 30 calendar days. You can either:

- Contact Educator Licensing at the MDE within 30 calendar days of the issuance of your Minnesota teaching license with your intent to appeal; and/or
- Submit a written letter of appeal to the BoT within 30 calendar days of the issuance of your Minnesota teaching license.

Although it can feel daunting, it is within your right to appeal and to advocate your legal right to a correct license. To date, we have been *very* successful in supporting applicants in appealing their licensure determination. If you feel that a determination on your licensure application was erroneous and you plan to appeal, please contact MinnCAN so we can provide support to the extent possible.

MN Rule 8710.0900 provides that all persons denied issuance or renewal of licenses granted by the BoT are entitled to a hearing on such denial. A person or an institution entitled to a hearing under the provisions of this part shall file a written request for such hearing with the executive secretary of the BoT within 30 days from the date of the denial. Failure to file a written request for a hearing within 30 days constitutes a waiver of the individual's right to a hearing.

To begin this process, submit a written letter of appeal through certified mail to the BoT within 30 calendar days of the issuance of your Minnesota teaching license to: Minnesota Board of Teaching, Attn: Licensure Appeal, 1500 Highway 36 W, Roseville, MN 55113 or send the letter via e-mail to board.teaching@state.mn.us.

The Board of Teaching Licensure Committee meets on a monthly basis and will review all appeals. If the committee confirms the determination made by educator licensing, further appeal will require a contested case hearing at the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings.

Section 4. Additional resources

- Minnesota BoT document outlining the application process: <https://goo.gl/LOV8Vb> —*up-to-date (as of February 2016) and includes some helpful information and relevant links*
- MDE page for “Applicants trained Out-of-state:” <http://goo.gl/Zm7pG4> —*out-of-date (as of February 2016) and includes some outdated and incorrect information*
- More specific types of licenses issued by MDE and permissions issued by BoT can be found here: <https://goo.gl/vb2hpx>—*up-to-date (as of February 2016)*