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*April 24, 2009: Comments for the Board of Teaching hearing
on proposed rules governing elementary and middle school licensure*

My name is Robert Gardner. I am currently a teacher in the Edina Public Schools. I was one of the Education Minnesota representatives on the 5-8 Task Force that considered elementary and middle school licensure issues. I was asked to be part of the task force because of previous teaching experience at the middle school level and because, at the time of the task force, I was the immediate past president of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English (MCTE). Both MCTE and Education Minnesota have an abiding interest in maintaining high standards for the teaching profession to ensure Minnesota's strong reputation for student achievement.

To begin my comments, I would like to share some personal experience. I have a 7-12 English/Language Arts Minnesota teaching license. While my own college education gave me some experience working with middle school students, the emphasis was on the content and pedagogy that would allow me to succeed as a high school teacher. Fortunately, my first job *was* as a high school teacher, which provided the best opportunity for me to work successfully with students. However, after a couple years of teaching, due to budget cuts, I was re-assigned to a middle school. While I did have resources and experience to draw on, I can now admit that I was ill-prepared to teach in a middle school. The unique emphasis on the combined social, emotional, and academic development of students requires specialized knowledge of both middle school students and middle school pedagogy. I learned fast—because I had to—but I did not serve my students well as I adjusted to a very different teaching environment.

I have a license that allows me teach six different grades, even though 12 year olds and 18 year olds have incredibly different needs as students. This is comparable to the situation before us today. The current K-6 licensure with a required 5-8 specialty has a scope that is much

too broad. In reality, the expectation is that these elementary teachers should be prepared to teach nine different grades. That's right—we expect these teachers to work equally well with five-year-olds and 14-year-olds. And, as the college education system is currently structured, we expect our future teachers to gain the expertise to do so in only four years. The proposed rule changes help moderate an expectation that is not realistic and that does a disservice to the students of Minnesota.

The current system of K-6/5-8 specialty and 5-12 licensure truly puts Minnesota's middle school students at a disadvantage. While I know our focus today is on the elementary/middle school issue, the same problem presents itself with 5-12 licensure and should be examined in the future. Our teacher preparation colleges traditionally focus either on K-6 elementary education or 7-12 secondary education. Middle schools, which do not fall neatly into either of these categories, are committed to a unique educational philosophy that does not fit neatly into either a traditional elementary or secondary model. Middle schools teachers are expected to have knowledge of the social and emotional development of students in the 10-14-year-old age range while simultaneously presenting students with an increasingly rigorous academic experience. These expectations can only be met with years of intentional study. Effective middle school teachers balance these various aspects of student growth and development with great talent—primarily because they approach the task with a specific, honed middle school philosophy.

With all due respect, the K-6 with 5-8 specialty licensure model presents most college elementary education students with an experience that is “a mile wide and an inch deep.” The requirement that these licensure candidates should develop the expertise—in content, instructional strategies, and social/emotional development—necessary to teach both kindergarten students and 8th graders is, quite frankly, absurd.

Minnesota's Academic Standards provide a meaningful snapshot of the impossible task we have put before these teacher candidates. The kindergarten vocabulary standards, for

example, require students to “see, hear, say, and write the basic sounds (phonemes) of the English language” and “match consonant and short vowel sounds to appropriate letters.” The comparable 8th grade standard expects students to “acquire, understand, and use new vocabulary through explicit and indirect vocabulary instruction” and to “apply knowledge of Greek and Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes to understand content area vocabulary.” Implicit in these standards: an incredible difference in content knowledge and instructional skills on the teacher’s part in order to turn these standards into reality with Minnesota’s students. Bluntly, the current K-6 licensure expectations suggest that teachers need to be able to teach *Dick and Jane* and *Romeo and Juliet* equally well—and they imply that being able to do one is, essentially, interchangeable with the other. We need a licensure system that better allows our teachers to meet Minnesota’s rigorous academic standards. Limiting the K-6 licensure scope will help achieve this.

Finally, we must acknowledge the fundamental issue of fairness. One of the reasons this issue was brought to the task force concerns the inequity in the system. A fundamental flaw in the current licensure system is that we expect Minnesota K-6 licensure candidates to also obtain a 5-8 specialty, whereas out-of-state K-6 licensure candidates do not have this expectation. In some circumstances, this provides an unreasonable advantage to out-of-state candidates, candidates who often do not carry with them the same high standards for elementary education that our state’s colleges and universities have. In this age of accountability, it makes little sense to have two standards relative to teacher preparation to obtain a Minnesota teaching license. Simple fairness dictates that all candidates should expect to live up to the same standard.

The proposed rule changes are a common-sense solution. They allow teacher candidates to concentrate their focus on grades K-6, which then allows them to study the content and pedagogy of these grades at a deeper level. This, by all accounts, will make them better teachers. Likewise, the 5-8 endorsements—with the invaluable student teaching requirement—clearly

create the expectation of increased rigor for these middle school teacher candidates. This will help Minnesota middle school teachers to meet the philosophy of the National Middle School Association, that “effective middle level educators understand the developmental uniqueness of the age group, the curriculum they teach, and effective learning and assessment strategies. They need specific teacher preparation before entering the classroom.” This again should help ensure that we develop higher quality teacher candidates who truly have an interest in focusing their craft on the middle school experience. This will lead to a stronger middle school teaching corps that ultimately should lead to increased student achievement.

A final note: As a task force, we also discussed the possibility of a separate license for middle school teachers. While in an ideal world this possibility would best reflect our value of a true middle-school focused philosophy, we also realized this was impractical. The proposed changes do not create a new, cumbersome system that limits the prospective pool of middle level teacher candidates but rather refines licensure expectations to create better teachers. It truly is a reasonable middle ground.

I wholly support these proposed rule changes and encourage their adoption.

Middle Level Testimony

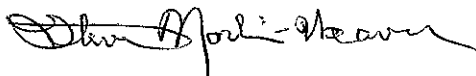
My name is Steve Norlin-Weaver. I'm a middle school principal in Minneapolis and past president of the Minnesota Middle School Association. It was because of my role on the MMSA board that I was invited to serve on the task force. In reflecting on our task force meetings the overriding concern was how to assure we have the most highly qualified teacher candidates entering the profession in order to best meet the unique needs of middle level students. To that end our task force unanimously agreed that the current K-6 plus specialty requirement should be strengthened and that a new license structure was needed for grades 5 – 8.

From a principal point of view currently, candidates graduating under the existing rule do not necessarily come equipped with a skill set to meet the needs of middle school students. It is not uncommon for middle level teacher applicants to have little or no experience working with middle level students or have a knowledge base built on the tenants of the National Middle School Associations' "This We Believe" and the needs of adolescent learners.

A prevailing feeling amongst our task force was the sense that middle level is often treated as the forgotten step child. A great deal of attention is given to elementary and high school preparation without much emphasis being placed on the discrete body of knowledge necessary for working with kids in the middle. After numerous meetings our task force honed in on three scenarios to forward to the Board of Teaching for consideration. In the end The Board made two recommendations that that I as a principal and member of the Minnesota Middle School Association am encouraged by because the recommendations acknowledge the need for purposeful preparation for teacher candidates in order to work with middle level students. The fact that to be a successful middle level educator requires a unique skill set is recognized. Requiring middle level teacher candidates to complete a minimum of a minor in the field of licensure and demonstrate the standards, as well as complete a minimum of a five week full

time student teaching experience in the content area in grades 5 – 8 will go a long way to help ensure that future candidates are in fact highly qualified to teach middle level. These changes will also help make certain that candidates will have the strength in their content area to provide a rigorous curricular experience, balanced with a focus on pedagogy and the specific needs of middle level learners. From a principal perspective I find this encouraging, knowing that new teacher candidates will come with a skill set and knowledge that teaching middle grades is a good fit for them and a place they want to be – an assumption that can't be made under current ruling. I am pleased to be here to support the recommendations as they will benefit Minnesota's middle level learners.

I am pleased that the Board of Teaching voted to approve the recommendations and I am encouraged that they have reached this stage in the rule making process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Mori-Heaven". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

My name is Susan Thomson. I served as a member of the Board of Teaching Reading Task Force. I offer my comments to you today in strong support of all the proposed reading rules.

I was selected for the Reading Task Force because I am a parent advocate and co-founder of a parent advocacy network serving parents with children who struggle with reading. I am trained as a reading tutor and for many years have worked with parents and students to develop strategies for reading success and worked with school districts about how to address particular students' reading needs. I have communicated with hundreds of parents who share with me a recurrent theme: their children are desperately struggling in school because they can not read at grade level. These parents are so eager to help their kids and so eager to support their public school teachers working so hard with their kids; however, most often these parents eventually conclude that their child's teacher does not know how to teach their struggling reader how to read.

This isn't just anecdotal. The NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) is the single consistent, ^{nationally} representative test on reading competence in the U.S. and commonly referred to as the Nation's Report Card. According to their statistics, 63% of Minnesota's 4th graders and 64% of Minnesota's 8th graders are not proficient in reading. In other words, the status quo is only working well 36% to 37% of the time. Of even more serious concern is NAEP data showing that 27% of Minnesota's 4th graders can not read at even the most basic level; these students are on a trajectory of illiteracy. The NAEP reading data also confirms that Minnesota has one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation. (See Exhibit 1)

We all know there are many factors that contribute to deficient reading skills. There is no simple solution ^{to} this pressing complicated problem constraining many of our children. Nevertheless, there are identifiable factors that help remediate this tragic situation.

One key factor is the effective preparation of our teacher candidates so they learn what they need to know and they learn what they need to be able to do to effectively teach reading to a wide range of students including struggling readers. The proposed reading rules are critically needed for improving the content and rigor of the reading curriculum offered to our teacher candidates.

Currently less than 5% of all course credits in Minnesota 4 year undergraduate teacher preparation programs relate directly to the teaching of reading. I know this fact because I studied 24 reading syllabi on public record at the Board of Teaching. From my review, it is clear that too little course time is required of our teacher candidates to learn how to teach reading. At present, our teacher preparation programs provide only minimal exposure to the content knowledge and practices deemed important for reading instruction and required by MN Stat. 122A.18 subdivision 2. In short, our undergraduate teacher candidates receive training in reading instruction that is a mile wide providing exposure to important topics but only an inch thick in terms of depth of knowledge or practices relevant to reading instruction.

So it is understandable that studies conclude that “Results from national surveys indicate that beginning teachers often feel unprepared to teach reading” (Baumann, Hoff, Duffy-Hester, & Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podjajski, & Chard, 2001) and that “new teachers are particularly concerned that they cannot meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds or students learning English as a second language (Parsad, Lewis & Farris, 2000).

In addition to referencing national surveys, I want to reference certain local research undertaken by 4 Minnesota institutions of higher education. Teacher educators from these 4 teacher preparation programs obtained a \$1 million grant for a multi year study aimed at teacher education reform in literacy, which includes both reading and writing curriculum. This research included an analysis of the content of their respective literacy syllabi for pre service teachers. These teacher educators found “no evidence of any systematic inclusion of agreed-upon literacy concepts or a knowledge base in syllabi... The majority of the course time centered on specific strategies and topics that were historically situated within the respective institutions (e.g. interest in whole language; book clubs) instead of being situated in the current, comprehensive, literacy teacher research base..” (See Exhibit 2 page 10) Given this critical finding, these 4 particular institutions attempted to address the situation but the concrete product they achieved in terms of syllabi reform at the 4 institutions was far, far less comprehensive than the actual impact that will be achieved if the proposed reading rules under consideration today are adopted. For me, this local research reveals deep professional commitment on the part of our teacher educators, but also reveals the difficult bureaucratic challenge in improving the status quo of large educational institutions through only voluntary initiative at the professorial level.

We need the proposed rules to effect comprehensive reading reform at all of our teacher preparation programs, so more depth of knowledge and practices are shared with our candidates in training. Most critically, the specificity of the proposed reading rules is needed to ensure depth in the reading curriculum and ensure coherence in content experiences across all of our teacher preparation programs on reading instruction. The detail and specificity in the proposed reading rules is a topic which received lengthy and intense consideration by the Board of Teaching and the Reading Task Force with careful analysis of alternate formats as explained in the SONAR. After 16 months of study and debate, complete consensus of the Reading Task Force concluded that the detail and specificity of the proposed reading rules is essential. The proposed reading rules represent a critical factor in remediating the reading challenge faced by many of our students. I urge your approval of the proposed reading rules.

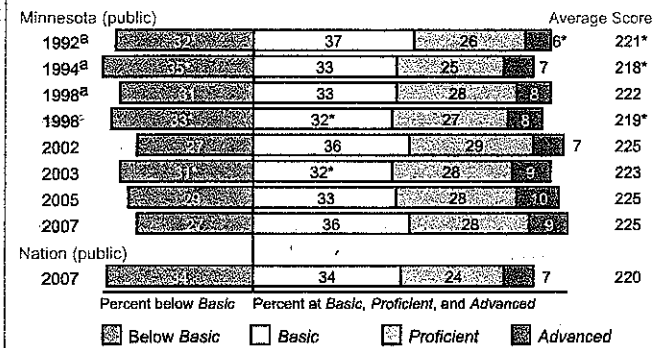
Thank you for considering my comments. Thank you for serving our community.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses reading in two content areas in grade 4: reading for literary experience and to gain information. The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500.

Overall Reading Results for Minnesota

- In 2007, the average scale score for fourth-grade students in Minnesota was 225. This was not significantly different from their average score in 2005 (225) and was higher than their average score in 1992 (221).¹
- Minnesota's average score (225) in 2007 was higher than that of the nation's public schools (220).
- Of the 52 states and other jurisdictions that participated in the 2007 fourth-grade assessment, students' average scale score in Minnesota was higher than those in 25 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 21 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 5 jurisdictions.²
- The percentage of students in Minnesota who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 37 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2005 (38 percent) and was greater than that in 1992 (31 percent).
- The percentage of students in Minnesota who performed at or above the NAEP *Basic* level was 73 percent in 2007. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2005 (71 percent) and was greater than that in 1992 (68 percent).

Percentages at NAEP Achievement Levels and Average Score



^a Accommodations were not permitted for this assessment.

NOTE: The NAEP grade 4 reading achievement levels correspond to the following scale points: *Below Basic*, 207 or lower; *Basic*, 208–237; *Proficient*, 238–267; *Advanced*, 268 or above.

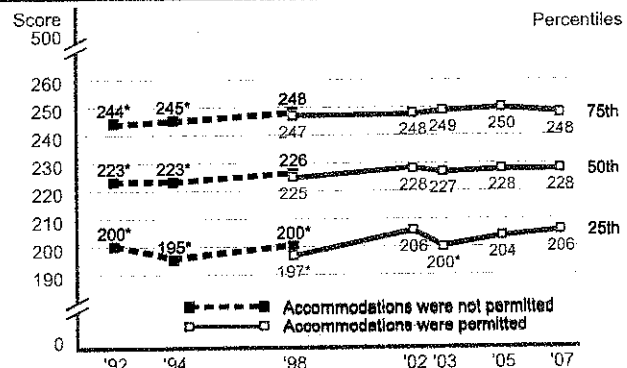
Performance of NAEP Reporting Groups in Minnesota: 2007

Reporting groups	Percent of students	Average score	Percent below Basic	Percent of students at or above		Percent Advanced
				Basic	Proficient	
Male	50	223	29	71	36	8
Female	50	227	25	75	39	9
White	78	231	21	79	42	10
Black	8	198	57	43	12	1
Hispanic	6	200	54	46	16	3
Asian/Pacific Islander	6	218	35	65	29	7
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	205	48	52	20	2
Eligible for National School Lunch Program	28	206	47	53	19	2
Not eligible for National School Lunch Program	72	233	19	81	44	11

Average Score Gaps Between Selected Groups

- In 2007, male students in Minnesota had an average score that was lower than that of female students by 4 points. In 1992, the average score for male students was lower than that of female students by 7 points.
- In 2007, Black students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 33 points. In 1992, the average score for Black students was lower than that of White students by 34 points.
- In 2007, Hispanic students had an average score that was lower than that of White students by 31 points. Data are not reported for Hispanic students in 1992, because reporting standards were not met.
- In 2007, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, a proxy for poverty, had an average score that was lower than that of students who were not eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch by 27 points. In 1998, the average score for students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch was lower than the score of those not eligible by 30 points.
- In 2007, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 43 points. In 1992, the score gap between students at the 75th percentile and students at the 25th percentile was 43 points.

Reading Scores at Selected Percentiles



NOTE: Scores at selected percentiles on the NAEP reading scale indicate how well students at lower, middle, and higher levels performed.

Rounds to zero.

‡ Reporting standards not met.

* Significantly different from 2007.

↑ Significantly higher than 2005. ↓ Significantly lower than 2005.

¹ Comparisons (higher/lower/narrower/wider/not different) are based on statistical tests. The .05 level was used for testing statistical significance. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Comparisons across jurisdictions and comparisons with the nation or within a jurisdiction across years may be affected by differences in exclusion rates for students with disabilities (SD) and English language learners (ELL). The exclusion rates for SD and ELL in Minnesota were 3 percent and 1 percent in 2007, respectively. For more information on NAEP significance testing see <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/interpret-results.asp#statistical>.

² "Jurisdictions" refers to states and the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools. NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free and reduced-price lunches, and the "Unclassified" category for race/ethnicity are not displayed. Visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/> for additional results and detailed information.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2007 Reading Assessments.

Board of Teaching Hearing Statement

April 23, 2007

Professor Deborah R. Dillon, University of Minnesota

Good Morning. My name is Dr. Deborah Dillon. I am a research professor at the University of Minnesota and I also hold the Guy Bond Endowed Chair in Reading. I am pleased to speak on behalf of hundreds of classroom teachers, reading specialists and coaches, professors of reading, and researchers who support the proposed BOT Reading Teacher Standards. Please see the letters of support, offered into evidence, from the (1) Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, made up of 32 institutions of higher education; (2) the MN Academy of Reading, an organization of reading professors in MN; (3) the Minnesota Reading Association, an organization of nearly 500 reading educators; (4) the Minnesota Reading Licensure Coalition, comprised of the institutions who offer the K-12 Reading Licensure Endorsement; and (5) the newly established MN Literacy Teacher Educators Group, comprised of literacy faculty from 28 institutions of higher education in Minnesota who prepare future teachers and support practicing teachers' development, including a special letter from Hamline University Faculty.

Reading professionals have worked over an extended period of years and in a collaborative and professional manner with the Board of Teaching and other professionals on reading initiatives in Minnesota. Our goal has always been to proactively address the changing literacy needs of Minnesota students and develop effective ways to prepare and continue to provide ongoing professional development in reading for practicing teachers. Past efforts include several actions leading up to the creation of the proposed reading teacher standards. In 2001, reading educators worked with the BOT to create the current K-12 Teacher of Reading Endorsement (effective September, 2003). In addition, reading educators became concerned that reading teacher standards were outdated and they formed a partnership with BOT director Karen Balmer over two years ago to initiate a revision of standards for preservice and practicing teachers, including adding new standards for reading coaches and specialists.

Reading educators stepped up their efforts when several individuals were appointed to a special BOT Reading Task Force in January of 2007. Reading professionals began a systematic and rigorous process of drafting new standards for teachers in the area of reading using national standards from the International Reading Association (IRA--Standards for Reading Professionals, 2003) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Early and Middle Childhood Literacy: Reading-Language Arts Standards (2002). Scientifically-based reading research findings (SBRR), reported in the National Reading Panel Report (December, 2000), were used to inform the proposed new standards and empirical evidence from multiple respected research sources were also used, including findings reported in the National Academy of Education Report *Knowledge to Support the Teaching of Reading* (Snow, Griffin & Burns, 2005), *Teaching Reading Well* (IRA, 2007) the Bush Foundation Grant Project *Minnesota Reads* (Dillon et. al., 2002-2007), and reviews of research such as *Reading Instruction that Works: The Case for Balanced Teaching* (Pressley, 2006) and *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (2007). We also reviewed the work of other states who had engaged in developing standards for teachers in the area of reading such as California (reported in the RICA documents, http://www.rica.nesinc.com/RC12_overview.asp --retrieved 4-23-09).

This extensive research review resulted in the new reading teacher standards, organized around the five standards outlined in the 2003 IRA *Standards for Reading Professionals* document:

- Foundational Knowledge
- Instructional Strategies and Materials
- Assessment, Diagnosis, Evaluation and Intervention
- Creating a Literate and Motivating Environment
- Professionalism

Minnesota reading educators also created a foundational document that includes an explanation of the research and principles undergirding the proposed reading teacher standards, and a developmental trajectory of the knowledge and skills needed by teachers in reading across their professional careers. This developmental trajectory begins with Initial Licensure, continues with Licensure Renewal, is followed by the Reading Teacher with Advanced Reading Knowledge, and extends into the Reading Leader. The rationale for a developmental teaching trajectory is supported by the work of Harvard Professor Catherine Snow (2005) with evidence that shows that teachers' learning (knowledge and pedagogical skills) increases in complexity across their careers. The proposed MN Reading Teacher Standards are grounded on a developmental trajectory illustrated in the following profiles:

(a) Teacher candidates working toward initial licensure are capable of grasping a firm foundation in how students learn to read and how these reading abilities develop. They also can apply what they learn, albeit in a limited manner, during rich, well-organized practica experiences. Novice teachers do not have the same level of sophisticated knowledge as experienced teachers about the range of readers in a classroom or the specific strategies that educators might use with a learner who exhibits certain characteristics on a reading assessment.

(b) Teachers earning licensure renewal display more sophisticated understandings about reading development. This knowledge comes from a layering of initial preparation, teaching experience, ongoing professional development, and often additional coursework in reading.

(c) Teachers who seek advanced knowledge of reading are classroom teachers who have sophisticated knowledge of reading and students' development but desire to move beyond this to work closely with students who struggle as readers. Advanced teachers of reading develop expertise with a variety of reading assessments and know how data are used to inform instruction. These teachers also provide leadership for other classroom teachers, often in their buildings and sometimes at the district level, in the area of reading.

(d) Reading leaders are an emerging and needed group of educators who provide PreK-12 school and district-wide support for teachers and other educators as these individuals learn and grow in their professional knowledge and skills to work with a variety of readers, particularly those who struggle. Reading leaders also focus on helping colleagues address the needs of children and youth as they learn to read challenging texts across the grades and content areas (e.g., technical/scientific texts). Reading leaders facilitate the work of educators from various schools at the district level in the creation of literacy frameworks that provide coherence and quality reading instruction district-wide. Reading leaders also review the research and help educators select and implement research-based materials and assessments that impact a large number of children and youth across a district.

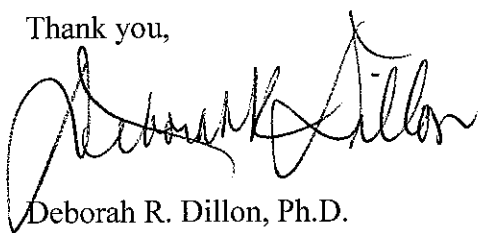
Now that the proposed standards are drafted and ready for use, the question is: **Will the standards be a powerful agent for change?** I can respond: Absolutely.

Currently, literacy teacher educators from 28 colleges and universities across the state of MN and colleagues from K-12 schools are working together to revise reading coursework to better prepare preservice teachers using the proposed BOT standards and the latest research findings (please see the agendas of these meetings, submitted with this statement). The *MN Literacy Teacher Educators Workshop Series* began last summer and is an extension of a highly successful experiment where four universities worked to create similar syllabi, assignments, and supervised practica experiences in the schools for preservice teachers. The goal for this series of work sessions is to collectively reassess how we currently prepare preservice teachers in literacy coursework so that these novice teachers can effectively educate students in K-12 classrooms, and support the ongoing learning of practicing teachers. As we work together we are exploring ways to develop innovative and effective literacy coursework and clinical experiences to better prepare new teachers—including revising syllabi, assignments, and assessments. We are also exploring ways to partner with colleagues in the K-12 schools to sustain the learning of novice teachers into their first year and beyond as they develop their skills over time. Research indicates that when higher education institutions work together on reading teacher preparation content, more consistent preparation occurs across the state.

In Summary, the standards and supporting trajectory are powerful tools because they outline ways to provide coherence between the literacy learning needs of Minnesota students and the preparation and ongoing professional development of the educators who work with these readers. Specifically, PreK-12 students' reading development will be supported by teachers who are educated in research-based instruction that allows them to help students reach a proficient level of reading on Minnesota's K-12 reading standards. This includes the more substantive and sophisticated knowledge teachers need as they work with the growing number of children and youth who require reading interventions or who are English language learners (ELL).

The real power of the BOT reading standards is not only in their intent, but also in how they were developed. These standards were not drafted by outside special interest groups, or imported from other states, or forced upon educators. Instead, they were created by Minnesota reading educators for Minnesota reading educators in the service of helping all Minnesota students develop as skilled, life long readers.

Thank you,



Deborah R. Dillon, Ph.D.

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Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Cara Hagen, and I am an Education Technology Coordinator at TIES. In that capacity, I provide professional development for educators in the area of technology. I'd like to share with you the story of how I came to this point in my career and how my work experience influenced my participation on the Board of Teaching's task force to examine the technology related licenses. In doing so I hope you will see how the proposed changes in the technology related licenses would benefit the teachers and students of Minnesota and allow them to better integrate technology into all areas of teaching and learning.

My own teaching with technology experience began in 1989 after I was hired to teach middle school English at Highland Catholic School in St. Paul. While I was a fast and accurate typist, I admired how easily my co-workers could revise using a word processing program in the computer lab. The computer teacher agreed to give me a lesson, and I came to rely on the computer for my lesson planning. I soon realized that the benefits I was discovering for my professional efforts could also apply to my students' scholarly work. Before long my English classes were meeting at least weekly in the computer lab for integration.

Rule 8710.2000: Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers does not currently provide for adequate technology preparation. The task force recommended changes throughout the document that would provide Minnesota colleges and universities guidelines to effectively prepare teachers to integrate technology. These changes were written specifically to meet the needs for effective integration as technology continues to change in the years to come. Our K-12 students' learning experiences will be impacted by teachers who, to quote Standard 3 Letter R, "identify and apply technology resources to enable and empower learners with diverse backgrounds, characteristics, and abilities."

Back to my story, a few years later I transitioned from middle school English to K-8 computers and moved to the resource room that housed both the library and the computer lab. While sharing that space, I came to appreciate the varied expectations placed upon an effective library media specialist. These individuals work with students and teachers with both print and technology resources, while managing the media center programs. The changes proposed by the task force to 8710.4550: Library Media Specialists will support this work. Minnesota colleges and universities will receive the guidance needed to continue the work they are now doing to prepare library media specialists to continue meeting the needs of students and teachers. The library media specialists will be able, according to the revised Scope of Practice, "to provide information and technology literacy skills instruction."

During the next few years at Highland Catholic, I began to provide technology professional development for the other teachers. I enjoyed teaching educators. Before long I was working as part time faculty at Hamline's Graduate School of Education, managing the technology course work. Working with educators across Minnesota, I often heard from teachers studying for the K-8 Keyboarding for Computer Applications endorsement. Their concerns were on my mind when I joined the task force to examine the technology licenses for the Board of Teaching. Issues those teachers had shared included the importance of

technology integration by all teachers, the need for preparation in technology education beyond the level identified by the current K-8 Keyboarding for Computer Applications endorsement, and the opportunity for teachers at all grade levels to achieve licensure in the area of technology with an endorsement instead of a full license.

These have been addressed by extensive revisions to Rule 8710.4525: Teachers of Computer, Keyboarding, and Related Technology. It provides direction to Minnesota's colleges and universities to prepare teachers for the endorsement in both greater depth and breadth. The rule also continues to encourage all teachers to integrate technology throughout the curriculum and across the grade levels. While the task force was not able to reach consensus about changing the endorsement from a K-8 to a K-12 Scope of Practice, I do support that change as well. I believe that Minnesota teachers are able to best serve their students by having the option to add to an existing teaching license to include technology through the endorsement process.

While I started my efforts with the task force while working for Hamline University, I now work at TIES, where I continue to offer educators professional development in technology integration. Proposed revisions to 8710.7200: Clock Hours: Requirements for Renewal of Professional Licenses provide an expectation that all educators participate in professional development to "integrate technology effectively with student learning to increase engagement and student achievement," according to Subpart 2. This provision means that the students would be emphasized in technology professional development for educators. Teachers would be expected to think beyond the technology tool to the needs of the student integrating that tool. I believe that if the requirement for clock hours is adopted more students will be learning through technology integration.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you adopt these changes to the technology related teaching licenses to benefit all of our students' future technology integration experiences.

Thank you for your consideration.

GREGORY R UTECHT

My name is Greg Utecht and I currently serve as the Coordinator of Technology, Information, and Media Services for the Lakeville Area Public Schools. I was one of two chief technology officers from school districts representing our colleagues on the task force. I began my career as a science department teacher aide in a high school while still in college, taught physics, chemistry, and mathematics in various districts and schools for 26 years, and have been in my present position since 1997. During this time, I have also served three area colleges as adjunct faculty in teacher preparation. So, I've been in schools and classrooms for the past 40 years. I first used computers with students in November of 1972 when we connected a remote terminal to a mainframe computer at TIES and successfully used it to help students graph their science data when they were struggling to do so by hand. For the rest of my career I have worked to spread the mantra that technology needs to be integrated with subject area content to best learn and use it. Over time, all of us have experienced the infusion of technology into our own lives. Indeed, none of us really learn new technology by taking classes in it. Rather, we learn it by using it to do the things we really want to do...talk on the telephone, find information on the world wide web, watch TV or other video sources, create lesson plans, help students learn, and more. We integrate technology into everything we do and we will continue to do so as devices become more mobile and technology continues to be increasingly ubiquitous and seamless in our lives.

Understanding this, the Board of Teaching commissioned a task force to examine and recommend rules relating to teacher licensure in this area. Continuing to relegate technology to any one or a few disciplines would be counter to the clear trend that has always shown that technology is used by all of us in everything we do. Students need to experience their education from that perspective. This task force, which actually began its work 2 years ago, was the third of three different task forces in the past several years to work on these issues. You can see this was not a new issue with the Board. As a member of all three groups, I was pleased to have us come to consensus recommendations to bring to the Board. Although consensus rarely means that all members "got what they individually wanted," it's a fact that there were many meetings and subgroup meetings with opportunity for all to be heard and to discourse on the issues. The recommendations are a testament to consensus-building and reflect what task force members felt were in the best interests of all. The recommendations ensure that technology learning is everyone's province. They honor the traditional areas of licensure involving technology while recognizing that the ways people use technology cannot be limited to the licensure from those areas.

Rule 8710.2000: Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers, was an issue right from the start. Technology is currently referenced so little that it is difficult to even find in the standards. Our revisions are in keeping with the notion that integrating technology learning into content learning is the best practice. Having it be a part of multiple standards means that preparation and ongoing learning will focus on that integration rather than the isolation that so often occurs. I'm expecting it to lead to different ways the colleges prepare teachers as well as different ways that districts inservice teachers. Imagine a situation in which someone took a course or workshop that wasn't about technology but came away with technology skills as a byproduct! We all teach from the good models we have in front of us. Staff development leaders need to be integrators of technology into their curricula as well. Especially important is letter M under standard 9. The understanding of the need for continuous development for teachers is a direct support for the recommendation on clock hours in a separate rule.

Rule 8710.4525: Teachers of Computer, Keyboarding, and Related Technology is substantially

changed by the task force for several reasons. It really does get at the heart of integrating technology by recognizing that content licensure and teaching are critical and that the ability to integrate and help others do so can be licensed by endorsement. In many ways, the work to gain this endorsement may exceed what the people in the traditional subject matter fields needed to teach these areas do in their study of these areas. What this licensure endorsement will now do is give the colleges the impetus to create programs that will significantly enhance their efforts to help educators in this area. Schools are looking for teacher leaders with credibility; licensure brings credibility. This will help teachers who hold this endorsement lead technology efforts in their schools, as well as give to districts licensed teachers who will integrate technology learning for students across multiple disciplines. Feedback from the colleges that now offer this endorsement indicated that they support the move by the Board to expand this license to a K-12 endorsement.

Looking at *8710.4550: Library Media Specialists* shows us the different kind of license that library media specialists have. It is one of or maybe the only license that gives authority to its holder to teach students, collaborate with teachers, and administer a program. The colleges that prepare people for this license long ago changed their programs to give these specialists the skills needed to teach technology skills. However, the licensure currently does not allow it. Implementation of this change will legitimize the preparation of these individuals. Further, the proposed rule again clearly emphasizes the integrated nature of technology learning rather than teaching and learning it in isolation for its own sake.

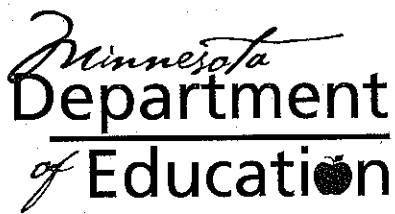
One of the most difficult areas to discuss is the role of the Board in individual teachers' continuing educations. Some say the Board should give a number of clock hours and leave all else to the teacher, some say the current method is fine in which the Board creates parameters for teachers and local committees to follow, and some say the Board should use the renewal requirements to ensure its priorities are fully met in its way. I believe that:

- Minnesota teachers are good teachers who always want to get better
- Teachers are good determiners of what they need in order to improve
- District and school priorities have a role in what teachers newly learn to improve their craft
- There are multiple pathways to the same goal
- The Board of Teaching is the standard-setting organization for educators in Minnesota

Enacting *8710.7200: Clock Hours: Requirements for Renewal of Professional Licenses* sets the standard for Minnesota teachers while honoring the other tenets. It states that teachers must show evidence of integrated technology learning in the cause of student achievement while not prescribing the number of hours, the means, or anything else. Teachers and districts easily can work within this structure. Its impact is in the tie it has with the standards of effective practice and the recognition that technology changes so much and so fast that we need to be sure people understand and react by increasing and changing their own learning and understanding and, therefore, teaching. Some will tell you that the Board does not need to do this. They will argue that it is the school districts' responsibility to train the teachers in technology. I ask you to consider that many districts' teacher unions are almost routinely waiving staff development set-aside funds in their districts to save jobs. Where do the training resources come from? And for those teachers not currently employed by districts...do we tell them that they can renew their licenses and not worry about technology because districts will 'catch them' up when they are hired again? This provision **reminds** all teachers of the need to be current and to focus on student learning.

I strongly urge the adoption into rule of the recommendations of the Board of Teaching's commissioned task force. Help our students learn technology as they learn everything!

Thank you very much for your time.



April 21, 2009

The Honorable Barbara L. Neilson
Office of Administrative Hearings
600 North Robert Street
P.O. Box 64620
St. Paul, MN 55164-0620

The Honorable Barbara Neilson:

The Minnesota Department of Education (hereinafter referred to as "The Department") assigned staff members to participate in the reading, middle level and technology-related licensure task forces convened by the Minnesota Board of Teaching. The Department applauds the Board of Teaching for the collaborative nature of the task forces that have resulted in the proposed rules you will be hearing this morning. The Department strongly supports the concepts behind each proposed rule.

The work completed by the **Board of Teaching Reading Task Force** has provided additional licensure rules that will impact many content areas of licensure. Given the importance of reading and the impact a child's reading ability has on academic achievement across the curriculum, it is no surprise that the task force has concluded its work with proposed rules in many additional areas. The Department is supportive of the changes in rule that set standards to:

- increase teacher preparation focus on reading in the early grades, and
- instruct teachers how to embed reading skill building into other content licenses to provide students with opportunities to learn the importance of reading across the curriculum.

The **Board of Teaching Reading Task Force** proposes endorsements that will encourage reading teachers to continue to work with struggling readers as well as to earn the proposed Reading Leader Endorsement. The proposed Reading Leader Endorsement would serve to recognize work done at the district level and provide an endorsement not assigned to day-to-day work with students but rather work done to impact curriculum, staff development and other district level initiatives.

The **Board of Teaching Middle School Task Force** has developed two important proposed rule changes regarding middle school licensure. The first proposal allows the separation of the Elementary Education license from the specialty requirement allowing a teacher to earn a stand alone Elementary Education license. The current rules require an applicant to have an Elementary Education license tied to another specialty, in particular

a Middle School content endorsement, an early childhood endorsement or a K-8 World Languages endorsement. The intent of the current rule was to increase the number of licensed middle school teachers while increasing the marketability of the increasing surplus of Elementary Education licensed teachers. The reason for the change is teacher preparation programs have reported there is not enough time to effectively deliver all licensure standards in both Elementary Education and a specialty area under current teacher preparation program constraints. Additionally, teachers and administrators, who hire the teachers licensed in this manner, have found the teachers entering the middle school teaching positions not as fully prepared to teach middle school students as they should be.

The second proposed rule changes will require colleges to address the lack of preparation the candidates for the middle school endorsement receive. Separation of the licenses will require colleges to prepare teacher candidates to the equivalent of a college minor and to complete a minimum of 4-weeks full time student teaching in the content area in grades 5-8. Given the difficulties experienced with the current licensure requirements for Elementary Education with a specialty, the Department supports the proposed rule changes.

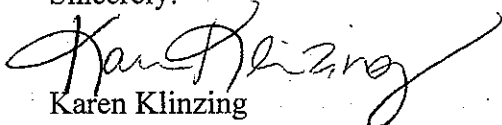
The **Board of Teaching Technology Task Force** has proposed licensing rules impacting all teacher preparation candidates, regardless of licensure held. The task force has proposed, and the department supports, the following:

- more technology preparation for all teachers through the Standards of Effective Practice. Given the increasing role of technology in our society and the use of technology in schools across all disciplines, this proposal is strongly supported by the Department.
- the requirement that renewing applicants demonstrate a minimum of 10 clock hours of study within each renewal period to “integrate technology effectively with student learning to increase engagement and student achievement.”
- a change in scope of the Keyboarding for Computer Applications from K-8 to K-12 and a name change to Teachers of Computer, Keyboarding and related Technology Applications. This proposal allows districts greater flexibility to embed technology education across the curriculum and allows more effective integration of technology into all learning environments.
- Clarification of the Library Media Specialist license regarding the scope of practice as well as a stronger alignment between standards and real world practice.

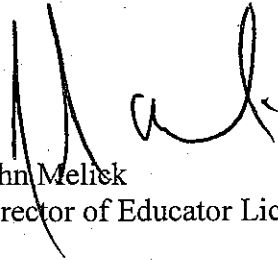
The Department commends the Board of Teaching for working with stake holders to improve the educator licensing standards in Minnesota. We support the proposed rules and believe the students of Minnesota will continue to be well-served by the teachers prepared under the proposed changes. Thank you for considering commentary from the Minnesota Department of Education. We look forward to continuing to work with the

Board of Teaching on these and other ideas regarding licensure for teachers in Minnesota schools.

Sincerely:



Karen Klinzing
Assistant Commissioner



John Melick
Director of Educator Licensing