

DATE: March 27th, 2020
TO: PELSB-Approved Teacher Preparation Providers
FROM: Alex Liuzzi, Executive Director
RE: Discretionary Variances-Student Teaching

The Teacher Preparation Committee met on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 to review variance requests from 28 providers from across the state who have expressed major concerns with their candidates' abilities to complete the student teaching requirements, as well as other program requirements, as set forth in administrative rule, given the state-wide school closures and other efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19.

First, and foremost, the Teacher Preparation Committee wants to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic is creating unprecedented circumstances for our preparation providers, candidates, and school partners. The committee wants to thank the many providers who submitted variance requests and information about the status of their student teachers and other impacted candidates on such short notice. The information and context was invaluable.

On March 27, 2020, the Teacher Preparation Committee presented these extenuating circumstances to the Board. Based on the Teacher Preparation Committee's recommendation, the Board approved the following discretionary variances for certain teacher preparation providers:

Variances of [Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, subp. 3G](#) for teacher candidates who have completed 10 weeks or more of face-to-face student teaching with the conditions listed below.

Variances of [Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, subp. 3G](#) for teacher candidates who have completed 6 - 9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by online or distance learning student teaching for a total of 10 weeks of student teaching (weeks do not have to be continuous) with the conditions listed below.

Variances of [Minnesota Rule 8705.1000, subp. 3G](#) for teacher candidates with 6-9 weeks of face-to-face student teaching supplemented by replacement experiences or verification of preparedness (weeks do not have to be continuous) with conditions listed below.

Conditions:

- All variances are limited to candidates completing student teaching in the spring of 2020.
- Providers must document for each candidate the following:
 - Weeks of face-to-face student teaching completed;

- Weeks of student teaching completed through an online or distance learning format (if applicable);
 - Replacement experiences (if applicable); and
 - Other verification of preparedness (if applicable).
- Providers must have evidence demonstrating that candidates are prepared to teach prior to recommending them for licensure.

PELSB will provide further guidance on how to track the use of these variances in compliance with the aforementioned conditions.

Please note, the above discretionary variances have only been approved for the following institutions at this time:

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| ● Augsburg University | ● Southwest Minnesota State University |
| ● Bemidji State University | ● St. Catherine University |
| ● Bethany Lutheran College | ● St. Cloud State University |
| ● Bethel University | ● St. Mary's University of Minnesota |
| ● College of St. Benedict and St. John's University | ● St. Olaf College |
| ● College of St. Scholastica | ● Southwest Minnesota State University |
| ● Concordia College Moorhead | ● University of Minnesota Crookston |
| ● Concordia University, St. Paul | ● University of Minnesota, Duluth |
| ● Crown College | ● University of Minnesota Morris |
| ● Gustavus Adolphus College | ● University of Minnesota Twin Cities |
| ● Hamline University | ● University of Northwestern |
| ● Martin Luther College | ● University of St. Thomas |
| ● Metropolitan State University | ● Walden University |
| ● Minnesota State University Mankato | ● Winona State University |
| ● Minnesota State University Moorhead | |
| ● North Central University | |

We understand that these variances do not apply to all teacher candidates. Teacher preparation programs at other institutions may request discretionary variances for their teacher candidates. These requests will be reviewed by the Teacher Preparation Committee in a timely manner. Likewise, teacher preparation programs whose candidates' student teaching experience does not fall into the above categories may seek a discretionary variance.