



# Minnesota Board of Teaching

To: Superintendents and Charter School Directors in Minnesota

From: John Bellingham, Chair, Minnesota Board of Teaching

Date: October 23, 2013

Re: Community Expert Requests

As Chair of the Minnesota Board of Teaching, it is my responsibility to do my part to ensure that all students in Minnesota schools are taught by licensed and highly qualified teachers. We do recognize that while this is our goal, there are at times extenuating circumstances when districts find themselves in a position of needing to request permission to hire someone other than a fully licensed teacher to work directly with students. As such, Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.25, Nonlicensed Community Experts; Variance, was created to provide districts with an opportunity, in those rare circumstances where an individual with a teaching license cannot be secured, to employ an individual other than a licensed teacher to teach classes. Since this statute is designed to be utilized in limited circumstances, the Board of Teaching is mandated to approve these on an individual basis and to carefully scrutinize the criteria that the statute demands.

In those rare instances when you, the school administrator, deem it necessary to employ these individuals "on a limited basis," please ensure that you are scrutinizing the applicants carefully. There are many licensed teachers in Minnesota seeking employment, so when the Board of Teaching receives applications for unlicensed individuals to work directly with students, we take our charge very seriously to carefully review the applications.

Prior to submitting an application, please answer all of the questions carefully and thoughtfully. The Board of Teaching makes individual decisions to approve or disapprove using thorough analysis of the applications and it is incumbent on you, the school leader, to make a strong case for permission to hire these individuals. Only by reviewing a thoroughly completed application can the Board of Teaching make an informed decision. It is not our intent, nor do we have the authority to curtail the use of nonlicensed community experts in schools, but it is our responsibility to respond to our charge of ensuring that the students of Minnesota have the best qualified teachers before them, and to do so by making sure that a real need for someone other than a licensed teacher is demonstrated by superintendents and charter school directors.

Thank you very much for your work in providing the best teachers to work with the students in your school district or charter school.