



**Date:** August 13, 2015  
**To:** Principals and Liaisons  
**From:** Kimberly J. Guenther  
Director of Concurrent Enrollment, Southwest Minnesota State University  
**Subject:** Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practice Policy Change for Determining Qualified Faculty

You may have heard rumblings about potential changes coming forward regarding the credentialing requirements of high school teachers offering concurrent enrollment courses in the state of Minnesota. For those of you at our recent College Now workshop on Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, we discussed this in detail, so you are well aware. For others, this may be the first you've heard of this. We will keep you well informed over the next two years as we plan and prepare for these changes. This is what we know currently:

In June 2015, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which is the accrediting agency for colleges and universities in the North Central region, which includes 19 states, adapted a policy change regarding faculty qualifications. The new requirement mandates that teachers have at least a master's degree in any discipline AND a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline or subfield in which they teach to offer a concurrent enrollment course. The board is allowing institutions until September 1, 2017, to meet this qualification. For exact wording, visit: <https://www.hlcommission.org/Document-Library/determining-qualified-faculty.html>

We realize that this is a huge jump from what we have required in the past. What we want you to know at this point is that we are looking into all possibilities, all scenarios and all opportunities for your students and teachers. The HLC has been fairly clear that they will not allow grandfathering in of teachers, which is disappointing. But Southwest Minnesota State University is committed to our College Now program and to providing access to college courses for your students. We are in conversation with people at MnSCU, HLC, NACEP, and other stakeholders with regards to all aspects of this.

While this will inevitably change concurrent enrollment in some ways, I'm still confident in the future of CE options in the state. I hope we are able to help provide opportunities for your teachers in the upcoming years to meet this requirement and ultimately have teachers with more discipline specific training and credentialing which will be a good thing. We are well aware of all the issues, hurdles, and obstacles ahead of us, but we hope to partner with you to find solutions and opportunities in various forms.

Because I realize the significance of this policy change, and all the questions you will likely have, I will be doing **a web conference at 10:00 a.m. next Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup>** for anyone and everyone interested in learning more. I will be answering all questions at that time. The link for the web conference is listed below – simply log on a few minutes before 10:00 am on August 20<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested but unable to attend at that time, let me know. We can either have a one-on-one conversation, or I can do a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of web conferencing. Please invite anyone in your district you feel should be included. At this point we are simply information sharing and idea gathering. For people who attended our annual workshop last week, the web conference will be a repeat of the information. Thank you as always for your partnership.

**Web Conference: Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m. (HLC Credentialing Changes)**

<https://connect.shot.smsu.edu/r9d3nhx5ni3/>