

Increasing Shortages

The 2015 Teacher Supply and Demand Report from the Minnesota Department of Education revealed two key findings:

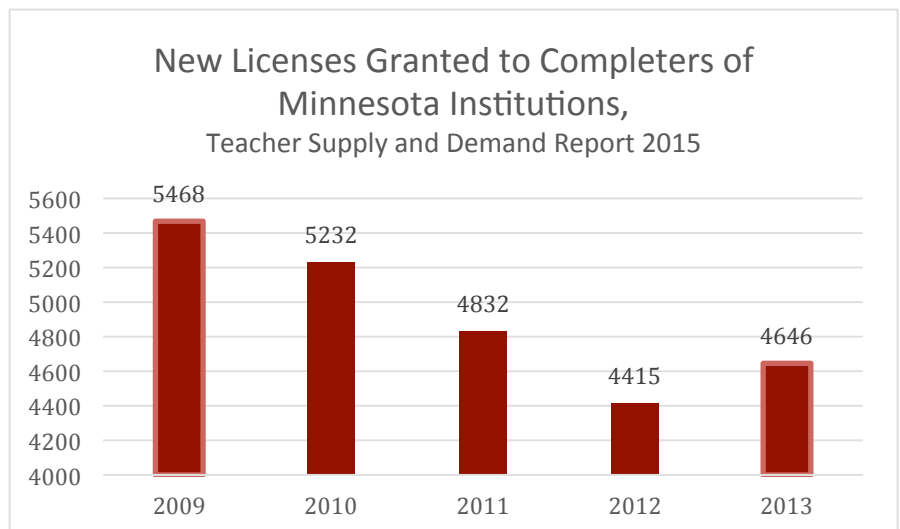
- **Mounting Shortages:** The percentage of districts indicating that it is difficult or impossible to hire qualified teachers in shortage areas is about double that seen in the 2012 survey.
- **Testing Barrier:** Testing requirements for teachers top the list of factors that challenge teacher preparation institutions' efforts to recruit and prepare teachers, and 63 percent of districts indicate that testing requirements represent either a small (27 percent) or large barrier (36 percent) to hiring teachers.

Available data show a slight increase in the demand for teachers, as evidenced by the percentages of district hiring officers' indicating that they have increased student-teacher ratios and eliminated vacant positions in recent years. These percentages are less than they were in the 2012 survey.

The supply of teachers has decreased, based on the numbers of new licenses awarded to completers of Minnesota's teacher preparation institutions. See chart to right.

The single indicators of supply-demand balance provide conflicting data. On the one hand, districts and schools require fewer special permissions than in the past.

However, the percentages of districts indicating that it is impossible or very difficult to hire qualified teachers to fill vacancies in hard-to-staff areas are nearly double those seen in 2012.



Four Trends for Policymakers

The report shows four trends of concerns for policymakers to consider in Minnesota.

1. Diversity Disparity

In the past 5 years, schools have reported increases in the number of students needing free or reduced price lunch and the numbers of students with special needs and students with limited English proficiency. Public schools are becoming more ethnically diverse as well, with the percentage of students representing non-Caucasian racial and ethnic groups increasing by 1 percent per year. Yet Minnesota's teacher workforce remains 96 percent Caucasian.

"This disparity in diversity of the teaching workforce and student population may affect student academic achievement of students of color and Caucasian students alike." (Dee, 2001)

2. Districts Struggling Double

While the specific teacher licensure areas experiencing shortage remain the same, the percentage of districts indicating that it is difficult or impossible to hire qualified teachers in these areas is about double that seen in the 2012 survey.

3. Substitute Teacher Shortage

A larger percentage of districts and charter schools indicate difficulty securing short-term and long-term substitute teachers. Respondents also expect to have more difficulty hiring substitute teachers over the next 5 years.

4. Testing Requirements

Finally, testing requirements for teachers top the list of factors that challenge teacher preparation institutions' efforts to recruit and prepare teachers, and 63% of districts indicate that testing requirements represent either a small (27 percent) or large barrier (36 percent) to hiring teachers.

It may be useful to determine if the issue applies to all three teacher tests ("basic" skills, pedagogy, and content) and what features of the tests are of concern. This study did not ask respondents about the specific tests.

Confirmation of the effects of the MTLE Basic Skills Test as a barrier to recruiting and hiring teachers is this table from the Teacher Licensure Task Force, 2013:

Percentage of districts unable of having difficulty to fill vacant positions with qualified candidates.

Emotional Behavioral Disorders	44%
Autism Spectrum Disorders	33%
Developmental Disabilities	32%
Specific Learning Disabilities	31%
Speech Language Pathologist	30%
Special Education Early Childhood	23%
Chemistry	23%
School Psychologist	23%
Mathematics	22%
Physics	19%
Industrial Arts	19%
Early Childhood Education	19%
English as Second Language	18%
Spanish	18%
Mathematics (grades 5-8)	17%

Ways to improve preparation in shortage areas, according to 29 teacher preparation institutions

Financial incentives, scholarships, loan forgiveness	8
Broaden/intensify teacher recruitment efforts	5
Loosen testing requirements	4
Relax accountability requirements	4
Improve public perception of teaching profession	4
Provide programs with larger budgets	3
Increase teacher salaries	2
Establish strong mentoring/induction programs	2
Change content standards	2

MTLE Basic Skills Test Passage Rates 2010-2013

	# Takers Total	Initial Passage Percentage	Cumulative Passage Rate	# Never passed
Reading	12,725	69%	79%	2,672
Writing	12,651	69%	79%	2,656
Math	12,424	68%	78%	2,733