



Presentation for the North Dakota Legislative Council: July 27, 2016

Good morning Mr. Chairman: I am Dr. Rebecca Pitkin the executive director of the Education Standards and Practices Board. Thank you for addressing this important topic and I would like to share with you our agency's role in this process.

The Education Standards and Practices board is the licensing agency for counselors and psychologists providing service in schools. Both licenses fall into the "restricted license" category (67.1-02-05-04) indicating that their program includes a specialization rather than a regular professional education core. Individuals are required to complete the application form, submit transcripts, fees, and a background check, aligning with teacher licensure procedures.

First I will explain the process for counselors:

The kindergarten through grade 12 restricted licensure is issued to applicants who have professional education coursework in educational psychology, instructional planning, methods, and assessment; classroom management; and school based field experience or practicum and completed one of the following master's programs from a state-approved program:

1. Master's degree in counseling
2. Master's degree in counseling with emphasis in school counseling

ESPB also provides licensure to individuals with a Bachelor's Degree seeking to be counselors through an Alternative Access Licensure. Ultimately school counselors must have a master's degree in counseling. However, with a bachelor's degree, an applicant can apply for an Alternative Access License with ESPB, then they work with a program of studies, the Department of Education and an accredited institution on their Counseling Credential. They have up to 3 years to complete the requirements (Chapter 67. 1-20-05-04).

Next I will address the requirements for a school psychologist:

An individual who has obtained a specialist degree in school psychology from a national accredited association of school psychology-accredited institution, or has achieved the national certification of school psychologist certification can apply for a restricted license. A restricted license differs from regular professional license in its specialization.

To become a social worker in North Dakota, an individual must have a bachelor's or master's degree in social work and be a Licensed Certified Social worker (LCSW). The state does not issue specific social worker licenses for work within a school and employs those certified by outside agencies.

The 2015 North Dakota Legislative Assembly included the passing of Senate Bill (SB) 2048 mandating ND school districts to provide at least eight hours of mental health trainings every two years to elementary, middle, and high school teachers, as well as administrators. Beginning August 1, 2016, individuals applying for a teaching licensure will be required to complete a competency course in mental health. Credit for this course can be obtained through UND, or professional development through a school district.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you the ways the Educational Standards and Practices board is supporting licensure of these critical individuals. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. My contact information is [rpitkin@nd.gov](mailto:rpitkin@nd.gov) or 701.328.9641.