

**TEACHER PREPARATION
PROGRAMS**

**TEACHER CANDIDATE
GUIDEBOOK**

Abridged Version

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Walden University
College of Education
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
The College of Education at Walden University.....	4
The Teacher Preparation Programs	5
Part I: Program Information.....	7
Academic and Professional Standards.....	7
Satisfactory Academic Progress	7
Description of Teacher Preparation Programs.....	7
Field Experiences	8
Professional Portfolio	9
Part II: Licensure Information.....	10
Transition Points.....	10
Minnesota Board of Teaching Required Tests	10
Applying for Minnesota Teaching Licensure	11
Part III: Other Information Important to Your Success.....	13
Credit for Prior Coursework.....	13
Academic Grievances	13
Dispositions	13
Background Checks.....	14

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Walden University College of Education post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs. Our programs will help you obtain the professional knowledge and experience you need to become a well-informed and skilled educator.

This abridged guidebook will help you gain a general understanding of the guidelines and requirements of the teacher preparation programs. It will answer many of your questions, but you will also need to stay in close touch with us here at Walden, especially your academic advisor, for specifics regarding your individual program. We are here to build a relationship with you, to help you be successful, all the way through your field experiences and demonstration teaching. You will be issued the unabridged guidebook when you matriculate as an enrolled teacher candidate.

The College of Education at Walden University

The following vision and mission statements represent the commitment of Walden University's College of Education to pursue academic excellence, embrace our rich diversity, value all of our stakeholders, and encourage civic responsibility through the promotion of positive social change. For our graduates to cultivate habits of lifelong learning and continuous advancement of their knowledge, we consider it essential that these statements guide us as we seek to ensure the quality and synergy of our programs.

Vision

The Walden University College of Education prepares adult scholar-practitioners in a commitment to positive social change for meeting the educational challenges of the present and future. The college is a diverse society of faculty, students, and organizational professionals dedicated to renewing systems of education worldwide that will support those learners most in need and promote the social responsibility of all learners. In doing so, we seek a system of education that contributes to building a civilization in which all may benefit.

Mission

The Walden University College of Education is dedicated to positive social change through a foundation of study that leads our students to reflect continually, expand their vision, increase their ability to analyze problems systemically, build new networks of collegiality and inquiry, and commit to action for the improvement of education and society. The college is built upon the premise that broad access affords diverse faculty, students, and organizational professionals the ability to communicate, learn, and act in a manner unbound by the constraints of location and time. The college is committed to enlisting educators at all levels to embrace diversity in all its human manifestations and to serve as a force for the positive transformation of society.

The Teacher Preparation Programs

The College of Education post-baccalaureate teacher preparation programs are committed to preparing candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of exemplary educators who work in diverse settings and utilize the best educational practices based on research and theory.

The College of Education is committed to candidates who seek to become skilled classroom teachers and to providing those candidates developmentally appropriate, student-centered learning experiences that build their students' knowledge and skills. To that end, candidates begin their Program of Study with a set of core courses and then are increasingly challenged as their studies advance in specific subject areas, as well as the pedagogy and technology necessary for effective and creative teaching.

The teacher preparation programs help candidates achieve six outcomes:

1. Demonstrate teaching competency, knowledge, and pragmatic skills to meet requirements for both Walden and Minnesota standards.
2. Establish an inquiry, reflective, and research stance.
3. Demonstrate professional verbal, nonverbal, and written communication practices.
4. Apply, analyze, and evaluate effective collaborative teaming principles, inclusive of parents, colleagues, agencies, and disciplines.
5. Validate and creatively defend a broad-access disposition to educational services.
6. Contribute to positive social change in the field of education.

Notes on Licensure

Walden University is approved by the Minnesota Board of Teaching to offer teacher preparation programs that lead to Minnesota licensure in early childhood education (birth through grade 3) and special education (K–12 learning disabilities and/or K–12 emotional/behavioral disorders). Before Walden can recommend you for licensure to the Minnesota Board of Teaching, you must also pass the Praxis I and the Praxis II tests pertinent to your teaching content area.

For individuals seeking a comparable teaching license in a state other than Minnesota, Walden's enrollment advisors can provide individuals with guidelines and other information about licensure. It remains the individual's responsibility to understand and comply with the out-of-state licensure requirements for the state in which he or she seeks to be licensed, as requirements vary state by state. Walden University makes no representation or guarantee that successful completion of any program or coursework will permit teacher candidates to obtain state certification or licensure in their home state.

In all states there are policies regarding out-of-state procedures that must be followed when someone is eligible for or has received licensure through an out-of-state institution with a state-approved program, such as the Minnesota Board of Teaching-approved programs at Walden University. Some states require that an individual actually obtain the out-of-state license first; other states do not require the actual license, just completion of a state-approved program.

For more information, please contact your Walden University enrollment advisor who can provide information on licensing requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand and comply with the most up-to-date licensing information for your state.

The university is required to include the following language specific to students in Alabama and Washington state:

- *Prospective Alabama students:* Contact the Teacher Education and Certification Division of the Alabama State Department of Education at 334-242-9935 or www.alsde.edu to verify that these programs qualify for teacher certification, endorsement, and/or salary benefits.
- *Prospective Washington state students:* Contact the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 360-725-6320 or prof.educ@k12.wa.us to determine whether Walden's programs in the field of education are approved for teacher certification or endorsements in Washington state. Additionally, teachers are advised to contact their individual school district as to whether this program may qualify for salary advancement.

PART I: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic and Professional Standards

High academic standards are important to your professional success. The skills learned in the course of academic pursuit will be the same skills necessary for success in the workplace: the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to analyze a situation objectively, and the discipline of study.

The Minnesota State Board of Education and Board of Teaching have a set of standards that clearly define what a teacher needs to know. The Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice and the appropriate subject matter standards (such as Standards for Teachers of Early Childhood Education and Standards for Teachers of Special Education) are all covered in Walden's courses. These standards include the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be a teacher. Teacher candidates in the teacher preparation programs will demonstrate that they have met these standards through their coursework, performance assessments, and artifacts in their portfolios.

The College of Education faculty is here to help you meet those standards. They will keep a watchful eye on your academic progress. Through teaching, advising, and tutoring, they will assist you in developing the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for your academic and professional success. Further, Walden University has an array of student services to support you. Please refer to the Walden University student catalog and the Walden University Web site for more information about these services.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

We believe that teacher candidates must take responsibility for their own academic experience, including knowing the standards, regulations, rules, and processes of both Walden University and the College of Education. In addition to reading this *Teacher Candidate Guidebook*, you should thoroughly read all other teacher preparation program handbooks and guides, as well as the applicable sections of the Walden University student catalog.

Description of Teacher Preparation Programs

Programs Offered

Currently, the College of Education offers three teacher preparation programs that lead to initial teacher licensure:

1. Post-Baccalaureate Program in Early Childhood Education (Birth–Grade 3)
2. Post-Baccalaureate Program in Special Education, Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (K–12)
3. Post-Baccalaureate Program in Special Education, Learning Disabilities (K–12)

Program Design and Structure

All of the teacher preparation programs are accelerated, intensive programs, offered entirely online, with concurrent supervised field experiences. Courses are offered in a prescribed sequence with completion expected in four consecutive semesters. Courses are five weeks in length, and candidates take three courses per semester, which allows them a week off between each 16-week semester. Each course is taken singly, with the exception of the final semester when there is some overlap with demonstration teaching and required coursework. This innovative model is based on research that indicates adult students benefit from accelerated models of education with enrollment in only one course at a time. In addition, the four-semester timeline to licensure allows you to achieve your goal of becoming a teacher who can enter into the licensed educational workforce in a timely manner.

Teacher candidates in the teacher preparation programs can elect to complete a fifth semester, which includes two consecutive eight-week courses, to earn a Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) degree. The teacher preparation program including the master's degree totals 43 semester credits.

Within each teacher preparation program is a group of “core” courses. These provide the foundation of educational knowledge and understanding necessary for all teachers. These core courses also meet the Minnesota Board of Teaching's Standards of Effective Practice.

Field Experiences

Field experiences are an integral part of the teacher preparation programs at Walden University. These experiences provide you with opportunities to apply course concepts in real environments that allow for increasing levels of responsibility. The field experiences relate to your professional goals, provide you the opportunity to connect theory and practice, and prepare you for daily classroom responsibilities. You are informed, monitored, and evaluated throughout all field experiences.

Beginning with the first core course in the program, you are required to complete 5 hours of field experiences in pre-primary, elementary and secondary classrooms or similar educational settings (such as early childhood education centers) that meet criteria established by Walden University. In addition, each course provides you with 3–5 hours of specially designed Virtual Field Experiences™ (VFE™) that are classroom-focused and interactive, and relate to the course learning objectives, standards, and skills for effective teaching.

CLASSROOM-BASED FIELD EXPERIENCE

Each course (except demonstration teaching and its co-requisite seminar) requires 5 hours of supervised classroom-based field experience. Classroom-based field experience must take place at the age/grade for which you are seeking licensure. Further, the exact age/grade levels required for field experience are determined by each program and specified in each course.

Important note: You may have to adjust your own weekly schedule (i.e., your personal and professional commitments) during each course to accommodate the need to be in a classroom for your field experiences while school is in session. The time spent each week in field experiences is approximately one hour per week until you enter demonstration teaching, when it is a full day every day.

VIRTUAL FIELD EXPERIENCE™

Virtual Field Experience™ (VFE™) is an organized, purposeful, and thought-provoking experience that allows you to see best practices demonstrated on video by master teachers across the United States.

Through the VFE™ you are exposed to diverse students, teachers, teaching styles, and classroom settings. The master teachers—men and women who are filmed in their own classrooms during regular school hours—represent a racial diversity, including African American, Latino, Asian American, and Caucasian. Most of the classrooms also reflect diversity in their student body, with children from many ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, creating a full-fledged multicultural classroom. Some classrooms are in urban settings, while others are in suburban or rural settings. The videos include a span of ages and grade levels, from infancy to early childhood to high school. Class activities are equally diverse.

DEMONSTRATION TEACHING

Demonstration teaching (also known in some universities as “student teaching”), including its co-requisite seminar, is the final experience in the teacher preparation program, undertaken after all other requirements have been met. Demonstration teaching is a supervised practicum that provides you with opportunities to gradually assume responsibility for total classroom management, including curriculum development, daily instruction, and the other duties of a professional educator.

Demonstration teaching has its own handbook, the *Demonstration Teaching Handbook*, which explains demonstration teaching in detail, including its policies, structure, and placement requirements. You will be issued this handbook as the time draws near for you to enroll in demonstration teaching.

KEY PLAYERS

There are three important people that you will work with during these field experiences:

- *Host teacher*: the teacher of the classroom in which you complete your early field experiences
- *Cooperating teacher*: the teacher of the classroom in which you complete your demonstration teaching
- *University supervisor*: the faculty member from Walden University who will observe and evaluate you throughout your demonstration teaching

PROFESSIONALISM

Remember to maintain a professional attitude with respect to confidential information about children and with respect to relationships and practices with colleagues.

Also, it is important to dress appropriately and present yourself as an educator. Even if other teacher candidates (or, for that matter, classroom teachers) don't dress professionally, you need to. Remember, you have only one chance to make a first impression, and you are becoming a role model for young lives.

Professional Portfolio

An important component of your preparation is the completion of a Professional Portfolio. You will carefully construct your portfolio throughout the program, which will serve two important purposes:

- It demonstrates your qualifications for recommendation for Minnesota licensure.
- It provides you with a showcase of your professional knowledge and experience, to share with prospective employers and to update as part of your ongoing development as a teaching professional.

Since the Professional Portfolio is electronic (and thus is sometimes referred to as the *ePortfolio*), you can access it anytime and conveniently share it with prospective employers.

PART II: LICENSURE INFORMATION

Transition Points

Each of Walden University’s teacher preparation programs has four “transition points”: specific times during the program when candidates must meet certain teacher preparation program and Minnesota Board of Teaching requirements in order to move on in the program and ultimately be recommended for licensure. The requirements for each transition point ensure that your education and teaching knowledge, skills, and performance are of high caliber. At the same time, we recognize that when you obtain your license, you will be a novice teacher. Our goal is to ensure that you are a highly capable novice teacher.

Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to manage your own progress through the four transition points. Please contact your academic advisor at any point for help and support. You will learn more about these transition points when you are accepted into the program.

Minnesota Board of Teaching Required Tests

As part of the requirements to obtain Minnesota teacher licensure, all candidates must take and pass the appropriate Praxis tests before Walden University can recommend them for licensure in Minnesota. Candidates must register for the tests at specific points in their program.

Each initial teacher licensure candidate must take and pass the following Praxis tests:

- Pre-professional skills: reading, writing, and mathematics (Praxis I)
- Professional knowledge (Praxis II: Principles of Learning and Teaching, PLT)
- Content/subject matter (Praxis II: Subject Assessment)

For additional information about the Praxis tests required by Minnesota, go to the Minnesota Department of Education’s Web site: <http://education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html> > Educator Licensing (in the Teacher Support section) > Teacher Testing Requirements (in the Section Links section). There are two documents— *Praxis I* and *Praxis II*—that provide information regarding the specific tests required for each licensure level.

Important note: You must pass the Praxis I and both Praxis II tests *before* Walden University can recommend you for licensure in Minnesota.

Registration and Test-Specific Information

Information about the Praxis tests, which are administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), is located on the ETS Web site: www.ets.org/praxis.

For complete registration (and other) information about the Praxis tests, click on For Test Takers (in the In This Section menu) to see the Praxis I and II test descriptions.

- Under each test, you can download *The Praxis Series Information Bulletin* from the Overview page under the About the Test tab.
- Under the Registration tab, you can learn how to register for the tests.

Important note: It is essential that when you register for a test, you approve Walden University as an institution to receive your scores.

For each Praxis test, there is a 10–12 page information document called *Test at a Glance* on the ETS Web site. These informational documents include the number and type of questions on the test, topics covered on the test, sample questions, and answers to the sample questions. To access the *Test at a Glance* documents, click on the About the Test tab, and then click on Download Library. Scroll down to the appropriate Tests at a Glance (TAAG) section and click on the PDF document you want to download.

Applying for Minnesota Teaching Licensure

Requesting Institutional Recommendation

Before applying to the Minnesota Board of Teaching for a teaching license, you must have completed a state-approved teacher preparation program, such as Walden University’s teacher preparation program, and have passed the required Praxis tests.

After you have successfully completed all of the requirements in your chosen teacher preparation program, you must formally request “institutional recommendation” from Walden University before applying for the appropriate Minnesota teaching license.

Applying for First-Time Licensure

The following information is from the Minnesota Department of Education Web site:
<http://children.state.mn.us/MDE/index.html> > Educator Licensing (in the Teacher Support section) > Apply for or Renew Your License (in the Section Links section).

You must complete a state-approved teacher education and/or administrative preparation program through a regionally accredited institution. You must also complete the required teacher licensing tests as well as the Minnesota Human Relations Program, or equivalent. (Walden University teacher candidates who successfully complete EDUC 6606 will have met this last requirement.)

OBTAINING AN APPLICATION PACKET

To obtain an application packet by mail, email the Minnesota Department of Education at mde.educator-licensing@state.mn.us. Packets are mailed on the same day the request is received. Please allow 5–7 days for shipping.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The certifying officer of the college or university where you completed your state-approved program must recommend you for Minnesota licensure. The certifying officer must verify that your completed programs align with the licensure area(s) and student level(s) for which you are seeking licensure. The officer must then sign and date the *Application for Minnesota Education License (Teaching/Administrative/Related Services)* to confirm that you have completed a state-approved program that led to licensure in each of the recommended fields.

List the college/university where you completed the teacher preparation program and attach an original transcript in an envelope sealed by the college or university. You must also submit official transcripts from all higher education institutions that you have attended, in college/university-sealed envelopes.

To apply for initial licensure, you must be fingerprinted for national and state criminal background checks. The fee for the background check is currently \$31 (and is subject to change). You must pay this fee with a money order or cashier's check (valid for 6 months or more) made payable to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; personal checks are not accepted for this fee. Please include your payment with the fingerprint card.

Note: Any license that is issued pending the results of the background check may be revoked based on the results of the background check.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

The application processing fee, which is currently \$57 (and is subject to change), may be submitted as a personal check, money order, or cashier's check made payable to the Commissioner of Minnesota Department of Education. This fee is non-refundable and will not be returned to applicants who do not qualify for licensure.

Submit all application materials in the same envelope, including all supporting transcripts, a completed *Conduct Review Statement*, a completed fingerprint card, a cashier's check or money order for the background check, and payment for the application processing fee. Any partial or incomplete submissions will be returned to the applicant.

Send your completed application to

Educator Licensing and Teacher Quality
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266

PART III: OTHER INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO YOUR SUCCESS

Credit for Prior Coursework

If you have taken previous coursework that closely aligns with Walden's licensure program requirements, you may appeal for a credit-transfer review by contacting your academic advisor. You may need to submit the syllabus for the course that you want to transfer. If your advisor determines that the coursework credit may be eligible for transfer, he or she will forward the appeal to the appeals committee.

The appeals committee is composed of the advisor, the specialization coordinator, and the associate dean. The committee will review the course syllabus submitted for consideration and make a transfer determination. **Important note:** Even if items required of the ePortfolio are addressed in the course(s) being transferred, you are still held accountable for completing all ePortfolio requirements while at Walden.

Academic Grievances

If you have an academic grievance, please refer to the Student Appeals and Grievances section of the Walden University student catalog for specific directions.

Dispositions

A disposition is not so much about what you do but about how you do it. For example, being adept with technology (or not adept with it) is not a disposition, but a skill (or lack thereof). On the other hand, a disposition involves your attitude toward tackling a new skill, such as learning and utilizing technology and being open to its benefits in the classroom and with the children in your care.

The Walden University College of Education is committed to recommending only those candidates for teaching who display the professional dispositions expected of a quality educator, someone who can and will make a positive difference in the lives of children and within the collaborative culture of an effective school. Therefore, assessment of candidate dispositions is one of the key assessments used by the College of Education to determine a candidate's eligibility for institutional recommendation for Minnesota licensure. The College of Education teacher preparation programs have identified several dispositions that align with our goals as well as with the standards published by the state of Minnesota and national organizations.

Background Checks

Background checks are investigations into one or more of the following: employment history, criminal records, driving records, education records, drug test results, sex offender lists. Prospective employers will usually require these types of checks before hiring you to work with children.

Why do I need to know about background checks?

Certain background checks are important for you to know about since you are choosing to enter a profession—teaching—that has many regulations governing the people who come into contact with children. Depending upon the state, district, school, site, and/or child care facility, different background checks are required and they may be performed in different manners. Background checks are primarily required of persons who are to become employees; however, sometimes background checks are required of any person who will come into contact with children, including volunteers or those (like you) who may be on site for field experience or demonstration teaching.

Thus, as a prospective teacher candidate in a Walden College of Education teacher preparation program, it is important to know about background checks for three specific reasons:

1. You will come into contact with children during your required field experience during certain methods courses.
2. You will come into contact with children during your demonstration teaching.
3. You will likely seek employment as a teacher or other educator or on-site school personnel once you have obtained your license.

Which background checks do I need to be most aware of?

The most commonly required background checks are criminal history (including illegal substances and alcohol) and sex offender list checks. However, again, the specific requirements vary state to state and even district to district and child care facility to child care facility.

What should I know about criminal histories?

Any conviction, even one for which you have successfully completed probation, is part of your criminal history. This includes convictions for drug and alcohol offenses and any misdemeanor offenses. Certain exceptions may apply, such as sealed records or records that have been expunged.

How does my criminal/sex offender history affect teacher licensure in Minnesota?

It is important to understand that teacher licensure in the state of Minnesota (or any state for that matter) is partly dependent upon your character, which includes, but is not limited to, your criminal history and sex offender history. The state needs to feel absolutely sure that not only are you qualified, but that you also have a good character to work with children.

When applying for a Minnesota teaching license, applicants are required by the Minnesota Department of Education to submit fingerprints (so that a fingerprint-based background check can be completed). Your fingerprints must be submitted using a “completed and signed Minnesota Department of Education fingerprint card. Minnesota state law requires that all candidates applying for initial licensure in this state be fingerprinted for a national criminal background check. The fingerprinting must be done at a law enforcement agency in black on a card supplied by the Educator Licensing and Teacher Quality Office.

You may be charged a separate fee for this service. Provide all required personal information, but do not make other marks or highlighting on the card. Do not bend or fold the card. This background check is for state use only.” (See the *Application for Minnesota Education License* for complete directions as well as the fee for the background check.)

Applicants are also required to complete and submit a signed *Conduct Review Statement*. This statement, located on pages 3 and 4 of the application for first-time teaching licenses, consists of the following questions:

1. Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (DWIs and DUIs are to be included; petty misdemeanors are not).
2. Have you ever been referred to a pre-trial diversion program after being arrested?
3. Have you ever been acquitted or found not guilty of a criminal offense involving sexual conduct, homicide, assault, or any other crime including violence?
4. Are any criminal charges currently pending against you in Minnesota or any other state?
5. Have you ever had an education or other occupational license revoked, suspended, or denied in Minnesota or in any other state?
6. Have you ever voluntarily surrendered an education or other occupational license?
7. Is disciplinary action against your teaching, administrative, or other occupational license currently pending in another state?
8. Have you ever resigned from or otherwise left any employment after allegations of misconduct were made against you or when an investigation into those allegations was pending?
9. Have you or a school district in which you were employed ever been a party to a civil settlement, award, or agreement of any kind that involved an allegation that involved your sexual conduct?

If you mark “Yes” to anything on the *Conduct Review Statement*, you may be denied a teaching license. See the Minnesota Board of Teaching Web site (<http://children.state.mn.us/MDE/index.html>) for more information.

Important note: If, for *any* reason (whether intentionally or by accident), you misrepresent your criminal history in the conduct review portion of your license application, your certification will be revoked. Thus, when self-disclosing your criminal/sex offender history, mark “Yes” if you are unsure about marking “Yes” or “No.” If you do not, the lack of disclosure—an apparent attempt to hide facts about your past—will reveal an untruthful part of your character that is even more troublesome to the state. This is true even if the crime you hid would not otherwise have kept you from becoming a Minnesota licensed teacher.