



# **Distinguished Educator Program**

**Program Description  
For Three-Year  
Distinguished Educator Program**

**Jointly Developed by the  
Minnetonka Teachers Association  
and  
The Minnetonka Public Schools**

**Sonia Labs, MHS English Teacher and National Board Certified Teacher  
Melanie Mozingo, Minnewashta Elementary Art teacher and National Board Certified Teacher  
Anjie Flowers, Executive Director of Human Resources**

## Overview

Minnetonka teachers interested in being candidates for the Distinguished Educator Program **must be licensed teachers who have achieved tenure in the Minnetonka Public Schools, and have a minimum of five years of teaching experience, at least three of these years with Minnetonka.**

This program is open to all members of the Minnetonka teacher unit, from early childhood through high school, and includes both classroom teachers and other specialists who work with children.

Candidates should be educators who have an exceptional performance record, and are viewed as strong educators by colleagues, students, parents, and administration. Candidates will participate in a rigorous three-year program that will give them opportunities to:

- Help already strong educators to conform to best practices and standards from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.
- Participate in the national certification process or develop innovative projects that are aligned with the District's strategic plan if an area of certification is not available for their area of expertise.
- Complete a portfolio and/or entries that provide educators the opportunity to self-study their teaching practices.
- Engage in meaningful cohort conversations about their craft.

## Application Process

Candidates will complete the on-line application form for the program. Prior to submitting the application, the candidate reviews the completed application with the principal or other direct supervisor. The purpose of this review is to discuss how the program has the potential to fit into the educator's professional development goals.

## Selection Process

For the program, up to 15 candidates will be selected each year. If more than 15 applications are received, candidates will be selected by the District through a random drawing stratified by level, as follows:

Elementary schools & Minnetonka Community Education Center:	7 candidates
Middle schools:	4 candidates
High school:	<u>4 candidates</u>
Total	<u>15 candidates</u>

## Timelines

Candidates for the following school year will be selected in May based on applications received in the spring.

### When are the application deadlines?

Due dates are as follows:

**May 1** Deadline for applications and your commitment to the 3-year program should be completed and sent to Sonia Labs, Melanie Mozingo and Anjie Flowers.

**Late May/Early June** Candidates will be notified.

## August

First year candidates will meet with other candidates in their cohort, receive an orientation to the program, and learn about the standards which need to be met to achieve the Distinguished Educator status. Second year candidates will either begin the board certification process or if no certification is available in their area of expertise, complete a special project which will benefit other professionals in the District. Third year candidates either complete the board process or project, if there is no certification area.

### Standards for the Distinguished Educator Candidate

The Distinguished Educator Program spans a period of three years and is intended to 1) offer the candidate a way to demonstrate the excellent teaching done in their classroom, 2) guide the candidate to set higher goals for himself/herself and to show their progress toward them, and 3) train candidates to make instructional decisions based on best practice, reflect on the effectiveness of each lesson, and to modify their practice accordingly.

During the first year of the program, the candidate will meet with their principal and with their cohort, plan their year and their goals, teach effectively in the classroom, and make a portfolio that documents their progress in examining their teaching practices and learning their content area standards.

The following are the Five Core Propositions for a National Board Certified Teacher and are central to our work:

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

### The Design of the Program: Basic Procedures

#### Before entering the program:

- Fill out an application for the Distinguished Educator Program.
- Meet with principal.
- Be accepted into the program before the end of the school year.

#### During the first or pre-candidacy year of the program:

- Create a portfolio that demonstrates ability to describe, analyze, and reflect on teaching.
- Join a cohort of colleagues to discuss the art of teaching, share challenges and successes, and immerse themselves in their specific content standards.
- Attend DE workdays and use release days to work on their portfolios.
- Submit their portfolios to building principals and DE Facilitators in **April**.

#### During the second year of the program:

- Complete one entry or special project approved by DE facilitators and administrator on the DE Steering Committee (*Special projects are completed by teachers/specialists that have no Board Certification area available*).
- Continue to collaborate with their cohort.
- Attend DE workdays and use release days to work on their project or board component.
- Submit their component to NBPTS by the **designated due date**.
- Hand in special project by **May 1**.

During the third or Full Boards year of the program:

- Attend DE workdays and use release days to work on remaining board components (or)
- If no certification area is available, complete a second project that supports the District's strategic plan that will be shared with other professionals in the District.

Support: DE facilitators will provide numerous types of support to professionals in the program

- Support during the first year will include the following:
  - 3.5 workdays with the DE facilitators and others from the DE cohort.
  - 2.5 days of release time, or up to 20 hours of curriculum writing time instead of the release time.
- Support during the second and third year includes the following:
  - 3 workdays with DE facilitators and others from the DE cohort.
  - 3 days of release time, or up to 24 hours of curriculum writing time instead of the release time.
  - Editors for components

Stipend

A \$1,000 stipend (at the end of each year of the DE Program) will be provided to teachers who successfully complete the requirements, which include the following:

- Completion of the portfolio by the **April** deadline, meeting the standards of the program, and successfully presenting the portfolio to their principal and Steering Committee members for year one DE's.
- Completion of one component to NBPTS or special project – for year two DE's.
- Completion of Boards or special project – for year three DE's.