

Subp. 4 Standards for Candidates.

Standard 16.

The unit must implement effective strategies to recruit, retain, and increase the percentage of candidates who:
(1) complete programs that address state and district teacher shortage areas; and
(2) are of color or indigenous in proportion to either regional or state K-12 student demographic ratios.

Evidence

The Elementary Education program is deeply committed to increasing the number of well-prepared teachers entering Minnesota's workforce, especially in teacher shortage areas and in communities that have historically been underserved. Standard 16 aligns closely with the mission and identity of Fond du Lac Tribal & Community College, and much of the program's work in recruitment and retention is grounded in relationships, cultural relevance, and meeting students where they are. Because FDLTCC serves a region with persistent teacher shortages and a high percentage of Indigenous students, the education program takes seriously the responsibility to prepare diverse, culturally responsive educators who reflect and understand the communities they serve. [Evidence: See *Elementary Education Handbook: 2023-2024 FDLTCC Elementary Education Field Experience and Student Teaching Handbook* pgs. 6 *Conceptual Framework, Mission, and Vision*]

A major strength of the program is the intentional recruitment of Indigenous students and students of color. The Elementary Education program is built on Anishinaabe values, language, and ways of knowing, and this culturally grounded design naturally attracts candidates seeking an educational experience that affirms identity and community. WINHEC cultural standards are embedded into all coursework, signaling clearly that students' cultures, histories, and knowledge systems are valued and belong in the teaching profession. The college's proximity to the Fond du Lac Reservation and neighboring tribal nations further creates accessible pathways for Indigenous students and community members to enter teaching. Through outreach to local high schools, tribal education departments, and cultural and educational programs, the education unit continues to strengthen and expand these recruitment pipelines. [Evidence: course syllabi with WINHEC standards: [Syllabus 2021-2025](#); FDLTCC website course outlines-look at Education (EDU) <https://fdltcc.edu/academics/course-outlines/>)]

The program also prioritizes recruitment into Minnesota's elementary teacher shortage areas, particularly rural K-6 classrooms and Indigenous communities where staffing challenges are ongoing. The state-approved B.S. in Elementary Education was developed in direct response to documented regional workforce needs. Local school districts consistently report difficulty hiring licensed elementary teachers, and the program serves as a sustainable, community-based pipeline for preparing candidates who are likely to remain in the region. Recruitment messaging, community presentations, and partnership conversations emphasize a shared commitment to "growing our own" teachers for local schools. [Evidence: [Advisory Committee](#)].

Retention is an equally critical priority, and the program's approach is intentionally relationship-based and aligned with Indigenous cultural values. Small class sizes, cohort-based learning, and individualized advising contribute to a strong sense of belonging and connection for students throughout the program.

Faculty intentionally integrate cultural content, community expertise, and Indigenous pedagogies in ways that help candidates see themselves reflected in the curriculum and in the teaching profession. These culturally responsive and relational strategies have supported strong persistence among Indigenous students and first-generation college students in particular. [Evidence: see [Elementary Education Handbook](#) pg 7 (Cultural Standards Woven Together with Dispositions for Professional Outcomes), course syllabi : [Syllabus 2021-2025](#); FDLTCC website course outlines-look at Education (EDU) <https://fdltcc.edu/academics/course-outlines/>,]

The program also actively works to remove financial barriers that disproportionately impact Indigenous students and students of color. Initiatives such as the North Star Promise tuition program, targeted scholarships, and grant-funded opportunities—including paid internships and workforce development funds—help ensure that cost is not a barrier to entering or completing the program. Academic tutoring, early alert systems, and individualized faculty outreach allow the program to respond quickly when students experience challenges. Because classes are small, faculty closely monitor student progress, intervene early when needed, and celebrate successes through Northstar kudos and community-centered events such as feasts and cultural gatherings. [Evidence: FDLTCC Website-Paying for College <https://fdltcc.edu/paying-for-college/>, FDLTCC Website-Tutoring: Center for Academic Achievement <https://fdltcc.edu/student-support/tutoring-center-for-academic-achievement/>, FDLTCC website-Annual events <https://fdltcc.edu/events-facilities-use/annual-events/>]

Data collection and continuous improvement are central to the unit's recruitment and retention efforts. Each year, the program reviews admissions, retention, and completion data disaggregated by licensure area, race, and year to identify trends and areas for growth. The program also meets regularly with local school partners to discuss district hiring needs, shortage areas, and graduate preparedness. These conversations consistently affirm that program completers are helping districts address staffing shortages while bringing culturally responsive and community-affirming teaching practices into their classrooms. [Evidence: [EDU Fact Sheet 2025-2026](#); [advisory committee](#); [employer feedback summaries: Ed D3.pdf](#)]

Overall, the Elementary Education program meets Standard 16 through culturally grounded recruitment practices, strong and relational retention structures, and sustained community partnerships. The program intentionally recruits and supports Indigenous and diverse candidates, prepares teachers for high-need and shortage-area classrooms, and maintains systems that promote student progress and completion. This approach is uniquely positioned within Minnesota because it honors Indigenous identity, uplifts community knowledge, and responds directly to regional workforce needs—ensuring that future teachers are prepared, supported, and deeply connected to the communities they will serve.