

MACTE Weekly Legislative Report, 1.26.2015

Prepared by Cyndy Crist, MACTE Legislative and Policy Liaison

Slow, Steady Start

Hearings at the legislature, at least in the area of education, continue to focus primarily on providing background for legislators on key topics in advance of hearings on bills. At tomorrow's House Education Policy Innovation Committee, I will be providing a brief overview of MACTE's policy priorities. Unlike a similar hearing in the Senate, Committee Chair Sondra Erickson is allowing members to ask questions of presenters, so some of us who expected to testify last Thursday were delayed until this week. Many organizations are addressing the topic of teacher shortages so I will again use examples of how our priorities could help ensure an adequate supply of teachers for Minnesota classrooms.

Making Our Case

As you know, MACTE will not be holding a traditional Day at the Capitol this year because of the challenges of the Capitol restoration work currently underway. Instead, we are exploring a number of ways for you and your students to "make our case" to legislators. Specifically, we ask your consideration of the following options:

- (1) **Host your local legislators for a session on your campus.** Most legislators return to their home districts every weekend, often including Fridays and sometimes Monday mornings. However, when constituents are involved, especially early in the session, some are willing to schedule afternoon or weeknight gatherings if the travel distance isn't too great and the timing works. These can be relatively informal sessions of 30-60 minutes and can be arranged through the staff person assigned to support each legislator. If this is something you would like to consider, please let me know and I can provide further help with planning.
- (2) **Plan to bring a team from your campus to the Capitol to attend committee hearings.** Both education policy committees meet on most Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 8:15-10:00 in the House and from 8:30-10:30 in the Senate. Agendas are seldom available more than a few days in advance, so connecting a visit to an agenda at which teacher preparation and licensure issues will be heard will be difficult. However, committee administrators can always be advised that a group is present and the chair will generally recognize visiting groups. Sometimes, meetings with committee members can be scheduled immediately after a hearing or informal hallway conversations can be conducted as legislators leave a hearing room. A series of such visits could make it clear that MACTE is paying attention and engaged. If you would like to arrange such a visit, please let me know. I can meet you on the hill and make the connection with the committee administrator.
- (3) **Participate in an alternate version of Day at the Capitol.** I will continue to explore opportunities with committee administrators to find a date when MACTE could have a few minutes on an agenda to speak to the committee (having students do the speaking will likely be best). If such an opportunity can be arranged, Kitty or I will be in touch to determine who could bring a team on a designated date.

Bill Introductions

You may wish to check out the following bills that have been introduced, though not yet heard by committees, with the potential to impact teacher preparation and licensure: House Files 2, 94, 244, 246, 2487; Senate Files 3 and 97. When these bills are scheduled for hearings, we may seek testifiers to help make our case, so stay tuned.