

MACTE Weekly Legislative Update 3.08.15

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The Pace Picks Up

Last week saw action on a number of bills of interest to MACTE. **In the House, HF 1170** provides for loan forgiveness for those who complete licenses in areas of shortage identified annually by the commissioner of education. There was discussion about including geographic shortages as well as licensure-specific shortages, and we expect an amendment to this effect to be presented at the bill's next hearing. I testified briefly in support of this bill, noting that we believe it would be more effective in addressing teacher shortages than the provisions in HF2. **HF 246** expands expectations for mentoring provided to new teachers. **HF 294** focuses on service learning; its provisions include one stating that the BOT may convene a task force to consider licensure provisions appropriate for service learning. **HF 789** would require the BOT to develop licenses, endorsements or credentials for project-based teaching assignments. I testified that, consistent with the findings and recommendations of a P-20 work group, we would not support a stand-alone license for something that is essentially an instructional strategy but support the idea being considered by the BOT to establish CAPS (Certificates of Advanced Professional Standing) in areas such as PBL. Finally, **HF 384**, which would have required all teacher preparation programs to offer year-long student teaching experiences next year, was amended to appropriate funding to MnSCU for up to two year-long student teaching pilots. I testified in support of the amended version, making clear the problems with year-long student teaching (not the concept, but the reality from both a programmatic and student perspective).

In the Senate, two student teaching bills were heard and moved on to their next steps. **SF 959**, the companion to HF 384, was taken up with a similar amendment to the house bill. Again, I testified in support of the amended bill, noting that a pilot would provide an opportunity to either show how a year-long experience could work or demonstrate why it wouldn't. The bill will move on to the Higher Ed committee. Another student teaching bill, **SF 1185**, was also heard. It initially specified that teachers supervising student teachers would be required to have at least three years of teaching experience and have been evaluated as "exemplary" or "effective" The latter provision was amended to state instead that the teacher could not be working under an improvement plan. I testified that without the amendment, MACTE would have opposed the language because of the challenges we already face finding enough placements for student teachers, but that with the change, we were in support of the bill.

Another Busy Week Coming Up

A number of potentially problematic bills will be heard between March 10 and 14, along with a few we support. House Education Innovation Policy will hear HF 645 on 3.10. It provides provisions for teachers licensed out of state that would essentially allow fully licensed teachers to teach under a limited license through the probationary period. HF 1347, to be heard in the Higher Education Committee, would provide a competitive grant program of \$1 million for alternative preparation programs that meet three stated criteria. MEC discussed this bill at length on 3.06 and agreed that Teach for America seems to be the only program that meets all three criteria. Because of this, we will be testifying that if the intention of the bill is truly to offer a competitive process, the criteria should be revised to enable other potentially interested programs to compete.

In the Senate, most bills to be heard are either similar or identical to the provisions of HF 2 and, as a result, we expect to testify in opposition to at least parts of each of these bills. They include SF 559 (Clausen), SF 473 (Pratt), and SF 97 (Bonoff). An additional bill, SF 664, is identical to Rep. Urdahl's HF 244. We have been working with Rep. Urdahl on possible substitute language which we think would significantly improve the approach to be taken and, in so doing, substantially reduce any new data reporting require of our institutions. We will be sharing these ideas with the senate author, Senator Patricia Torres-Ray, in advance of her bill's hearing.