

MACTE Weekly Legislative Report, 5.08.15
Prepared by Cyndy Crist, MACTE Legislative and Policy Liaison

Waiting for Targets

Both conference committees have begun to meet, but discussions have been only informational. It appears that no action is being taken publicly until the three key leaders – House Speaker Kurt Daudt, Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk, and Governor Mark Dayton – agree to spending targets. They have reportedly been meeting in private and are scheduled to spend the fishing opener together on Saturday. We can only hope that they come back with agreements that will point the way to completing their business by the mandated adjournment date of May 18. There are rumors that both bodies will agree to only advance finance provisions in the omnibus bills currently being considered, omitting policy provisions as too difficult to reconcile in time, but there is no way of knowing if this is true. There is also speculation that conference committee chairs are meeting behind closed doors to shape language agreements but again there is no confirmation.

Higher Education Conference Committee. The higher education conference committee has met just once, on Tuesday, May 5. Staff did a walk through of the provisions of each body's bill laid out in a "side-by-side" comparison. No further meetings have been scheduled. If you haven't already done so, it is still timely to contact committee members by phone or email with our simple MACTE request to include funding for a teacher shortage loan forgiveness program in their final bill.

E-12 Education Conference Committee. The E-12 education conference committee also began meeting on Tuesday, May 5 and has met daily since then. They started with a walk-through of their side-by-side and have subsequently invited those who are interested to testify on five topics: facilities, Q-Comp, student testing, extended support revenue, and early childhood education. Members have asked a few questions for clarification, but there has been no discussion of issues. It is expected that their next meeting will be on Monday, May 11. I am watching closely for an opportunity to speak to issues of teacher preparation and licensure on behalf of MACTE.

With time running short, we urge you to contact members of the committee now, by telephone or email, with this simple message: **Please retain the state's high standards for licensure as you consider means to increase the flexibility needed to address hiring problems in school districts across the state. The language addressing licensure issues in SF 1495 represents a workable compromise that earned the support of a wide range of education organizations and we urge you to adopt that language.** As always, please mention in your email if you are a constituent of a legislator and/or if your college/university is in his/her district.

Members of the E-12 conference committee are:

Sen. Chuck Wiger, 651.296.6820, <http://senate.mn/senatorwigeremail>
Sen. Alice Johnson, 651.296.2556, <http://senate.mn/senatorjohnsonemail>
Sen. Eric Pratt, 651.296.4123, sen.eric.pratt@senate.mn
Sen. Kevin Dahle, 651.296.1279, <http://www.senate.mn/senatordahleemail>
Sen. Leroy Stumpf, 651.296.8660, <http://www.senate.mn/senatorstumpfemail>
Rep. Jenifer Loon, 651.296.7449, rep.jenifer.loon@house.mn
Rep. Sondra Erickson, 800.709.0578, rep.sondra.erickson@house.mn
Rep. Ron Kresha, 888.727.4612, rep.ron.kresha@house.mn
Rep. Bob Dettmer, 651.296.4124, rep.bob.dettmer@house.mn
Rep. Roz Peterson, 651.296.5387, rep.roz.peterson@house.mn