

MACTE Weekly Legislative Update, 1.22.17
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Informational Hearings Continue.

As is typical early in the session, the education committees in the House and Senate held informational hearings on a variety of topics last week. Of particular interest were two held on Tuesday, 1.17. That day, the House Education Innovation Policy Committee focused on the OLA report, subsequent work of the Legislative Study Group on Educator Licensing, and an update from the Board of Teaching. Of particular interest was a statement by Chair Sondra Erickson that the bill she will introduce responding to OLA recommendations will include a recommendation that all licensure activities be consolidated under a board similar to the BOT rather than under the MN Department of Education. She provided no other details, but this was a promising development relative to our own priorities for licensure, and she made some comments more favorable to the BOT than seems to have previously been the case.

Later that same day, the Senate E-12 Policy Committee held a hearing on the report of the Career and Technical Educator Licensing Advisory Task Force. Because there are a number of recommendations in that report with implications for teacher preparation and licensure, I suggest you find and review this report. It is available on the MDE website (under About MDE, then Advisory Boards, Councils and Task Forces). There are several members on both House and Senate policy committees with strong interests in CTE so I expect this to be a focus of further discussion and action during the 2017 session. The BOT has expressed support for the recommendations of the task force.

Coming Up This Week.

On Monday, 1.23, Governor Dayton will give his State of the State speech, and later in the week committees in both the House and Senate will hear presentations on the Governor's budget recommendations for MDE. In the House, the Education Finance Committee will take up this topic on Wednesday, 1.25 at 1:00 p.m., and the Senate E-12 Finance Committee will take it up that same day at 3:00 p.m. At this time, no other topics focused on preparation and licensure have been announced for policy or finance committees.

A Busy Week in Washington.

I suspect many of you have been hearing about an array of activities in Washington, D.C. during this past inauguration week, including the hearing on President Trump's nominee to head up the U.S. Department of Education, Betsy DeVos. As you may well be aware, she is a strong proponent of what some call the privatization of education and she appears to be a strong opponent of teachers' unions. Minnesota Senator Al Franken asked some excellent questions of the nominee. Of course, AACTE is always a good source for information on federal education developments. In general, it is my observation that the strong divisions in Washington have not had a major influence in our own state legislature, but this is one of many dynamics worth watching as the 2017 session progresses.