

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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MACTE Minute, Friday, January 13, 2017 2017 Legislative Issues and Priorities

As the 2017 legislative session gets underway, our thoughts, like yours, turn to the issues likely to be discussed and acted upon by the Minnesota Legislature. Our MACTE minute today will briefly highlight our priorities for the upcoming session.

First and foremost are the issues discussed over the past six months by the Legislative Study Group on Educator Licensing. MACTE has consistently taken positions that are largely in agreement with the recommendations put forward in the report last year by the Office of the Legislative Auditor and with those you have shared with the study group.

Specifically, we support the recommendation to consolidate all licensure-related responsibilities under the Minnesota Board of Teaching or a similar body made up of a majority of teachers. This is consistent with most licensing boards in the state, and particularly those responsible for professions most similar to teaching. We would also hope that higher education would continue to have a seat on the board.

Secondly, we support the creation of a tiered licensure system that would bring clarity, consistency, fairness, and flexibility to licensing without compromising the high standards that students, schools, and communities deserve. We also believe that a tiered licensure system should recognize and value experience, preparation, and assessment in an environment of “trust but verify” and provide for the progression of individuals into and through the profession of teaching. Such a system should also recognize that not everyone who spends time teaching will want a full credential for continuing licensure and teaching but that the scope of practice of such individuals should be limited.

Third, we are hopeful that the legislature will make the kinds of statutory changes which you as a board have recommended in order to correct the contradictory, confusing, and inconsistent language presently in statute. We look forward to reviewing the changes that we understand have been prepared by staff and hope they will remove current impediments to clear and consistent practice.

Finally, we remain committed to actions that will address existing and emerging shortages and increase the diversity of our Minnesota teaching cadre. We believe that some of the actions resulting from the OLA report will help us make progress towards these essential goals but that additional, targeted steps will be needed if you are to meet your mission of “assuring that Minnesota students are served by licensed teachers who are equipped to deliver effective instruction and meet the instructional needs of all learners.” Implicit in this mission statement is an adequate supply of teachers who are more reflective of, and skilled in teaching, an increasingly diverse body of students.

As always, MACTE stands ready to collaborate with you to reach our common goals.