

5.10.17 MACTE Legislative Update
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Hurry Up and Wait, and Political Brinksmanship

Things at the Capitol have entered the final, unpredictable, and frequently frustrating phase of the legislative session. With less than two weeks to go, hearings are scheduled and delayed, rescheduled and delayed again, and sometimes cancelled entirely or called with little notice. Meanwhile, discussions designed to work out differences between majority Republican legislative leadership and the DFL governor have reportedly broken down, and Governor Dayton has promised to veto any omnibus bills that come to him without further negotiations. Long-time lobbyists are beginning to predict a special session and make their best guesses about when everything will be resolved.

Within this context, the **E-12 Omnibus bill (HF 890)** was passed by both bodies of the legislature last night (Tuesday, 5.09). Provisions of interest to MACTE primarily involve funding provisions, since licensure issues have, as you may recall, been pulled out for separate consideration. Some specific items in the bill include:

- \$500,000 for FY 2018 only for the teacher shortage loan forgiveness program;
- \$2.08 million for FY 2018 only for student teachers in shortage areas grants;
- \$1.5 million each year for Grow-Your-Own programs;
- \$1 million each year for CUE programs, including a new, competitive grant opportunity open to any approved teacher preparation program;
- \$460,000 each year for American Indian Teacher Preparation grants;
- \$100,000 each year for the African American Registry program (Metropolitan State University and the University of St. Thomas);
- \$750,000 in FY 2018 only for an Alternative Teacher Preparation Program grant; and
- \$385,000 total for FY 2018-2019 for the Southwest Minnesota State University special education program.

The bill also includes a number of funding provisions for the Board of Teaching or its successor and language allowing ATPP (or QComp) funding to be used for Grow-Your-Own programs and to address equity/achievement gap strategies.

The **Higher Education Omnibus bill (HF 2214)** is expected to be taken up by both bodies today (Wednesday, 5.10). It includes \$500,000 each year for grants to teacher candidates in shortage areas (with the definition of shortages expanded) and \$200,000 each year for the teacher shortage loan forgiveness program.

Licensure Updates.

The conference committee seeking to resolve differences between HF 140 (being used to carry licensure discussions forward) and SF 4 held its second hearing this morning. After adopting provisions identified as “same or similar,” the chair surprised attendees by inviting testimony, something that seldom happens in conference committees. I was one of a handful of testifiers and focused my remarks primarily on MACTE’s concerns with some provisions of the tiered licensure proposals. The committee adjourned after an hour in order to confer with Commissioner Cassellius, which many saw as a hopeful sign that this bill, at least, may be finished on time. The next hearing is expected to be convened on Monday, 5.15.