

MACTE Legislative Update, 3.23.2018
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Activity at the Capitol. As the legislature approaches its first committee deadline, things have begun moving more quickly, at least on the House side. Issues in bills not brought up before the Education Policy Innovation Committee were offered as amendments to Chair Erickson's "Delete All" version of the policy bill originally offered by MDE, HF 3315. These included an attempt to delete the option for Tier 3 licenses that would allow an individual to secure a license without having completed a preparation program in Minnesota or any other state; to extend until July 1, 2019 completion of the rulemaking process to guide implementation of the tiered licensure system; and to include data on diverse teachers within the new "star" rating system for schools. The rulemaking extension bill had secured support from nearly a dozen organizations, including MACTE, MSBA, MASA, MASSP, MESPA, AMSD, MREA, and EdMN. Unfortunately, Chair Erickson opposed these and nearly all other amendments offered to her bill, primarily on the basis that the issues had not been brought first to the authors of the bills or bill language in question. This was puzzling and disturbing to many members of the committee (and public) since, as they expressed it, bringing forward suggestions for changes is clearly part of the purpose of public committee hearings. In any case, because of the stated opposition of the chair, most amendments failed on straight party line votes. One, the change to Tier 3 licensure requirements, failed on an 8-to-8 vote, with Rep. Dean Urdahl joining with DFL members to support the change. By contrast, an amendment that would require PELSB to survey all board-approved teacher preparation programs to determine the extent of dyslexia instruction offered by programs and report its findings to the legislature by January 2, 2019 passed.

More encouraging were discussions later today in the House Education Finance Committee on two bills to increase funding for Grow Your Own programs and other efforts to increase the number of teachers of color in Minnesota classrooms. Specifically, the committee heard HF 3208 (Fenton), which would increase funding in 2019 by \$3.5 million for Grow Your Own programs, and HF 3594 (Koznick), the bill brought forward by the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers. HF 3594 would support four pathways: use of staff development and other funding to mentor and retain teachers of color and American Indian teachers; use of achievement and integration revenue to hire diverse staff; expansion of Grow Your Own programs; and expanded CUE program funding for more higher education institutions in Greater Minnesota. Both bills, like all others heard today in the committee, were laid on the table for possible inclusion in the Education Finance bill.

Less Activity in Senate. Very few bills have been heard in the Senate involving teacher preparation and licensure. Those who support the efforts described above which were heard this week in the House are hopeful that they will eventually make their way into omnibus bills, either via future committee action in the House and/or Senate or action on the floor of the House and Senate. Stay tuned for possible future calls to action to contact your House and Senate members in support of these issues.

Day at the Capitol Cancelled. As you may well know by now, we have cancelled plans for this year's Day at the Capitol based on low participation. MACTE leadership are hopeful that next year, when we have a larger window of opportunity to schedule a MACTE day, we can generate more participation and gather to make direct contact with legislators in support of issues of importance to our students, faculty, programs, and institutions.