

**MACTE Weekly Legislative Update, 2.08.19**  
**Prepared by Cyndy Crist, MACTE Legislative and Policy Liaison**

**Reading Bills Heard in Senate.** On Wednesday, 2.06, the Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee took up six bills having to do with reading and dyslexia: SFs 116, 196, 229, 651, 733, and 772. MACTE was ably represented by Dr. Deborah Dillon from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities (unfortunately, I was called away on a family medical matter earlier in the afternoon and was unable to attend). The two overarching points addressed by Deborah were the need for clarity surrounding how we prepare teachers to teach reading and how we prepare teachers to work with students diagnosed with learning disabilities, including dyslexia. She shared key information from the research about balanced literacy, explicit word-level reading instruction, and the need to address dyslexia as part of our overall effort to effectively teach students of all disabilities and learning needs. A response to information shared the previous week about NCTQ was also distributed.

As was the case when reading was a hot legislative topic about ten years ago, compelling stories shared by parents seemed to carry more weight with at least some legislators than our positions, which were carefully supported by research and data. To date, no companion bills have been taken up in the House, so it is possible that the Senate measures will not advance beyond that body. That said, this is an issue that we will continue to follow closely as we seek to provide legislators with the information needed to support strong policy decisions.

**Other Topics of Interest.**

1. Bills to advance many of the goals and proposals of the **Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota** have now been introduced in both the House and Senate. They are House File 824 (whose authors include Rep. Mary Kunesh-Podein and Carlos Mariani) and Senate File 1012 (with Senator Patricia Torres-Ray among a number of authors). While some other bills under consideration may address some specific elements of the Coalition's legislative priorities, these two are comprehensive bills designed to "move the needle" more substantially.
2. A number of **special education bills** have now been introduced, but to date they primarily address funding and teacher workload issues. Also, HF 713 was introduced this week; its purpose is to create a legislative working group to address a significant number of special education issues. We will continue to follow this issue closely in case licensure related bills are introduced and heard.