

MACTE Legislative Update, 3.01.19
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Legislative Pace Picking Up. As the session approaches the first deadline for committee action on Friday, March 15, the pace of hearings has picked up, especially in the House. Education committees that are scheduled to normally meet two or three times a week are sometimes convening four times, and many agendas have long lists of bills to be heard.

Of particular interest, as noted recently, is the hearing on Monday, March 4 at 10:00 a.m. during which the House Education Policy Committee will take up HF 1415, the PELSB bill focused on some changes in statute regarding PELSB duties and membership, and HF 1329, the bill seeking modifications in statutory language governing teacher licensure. MACTE hopes to offer brief testimony in support of several of the proposed changes in HF 1329, specifically regarding tier 2, 3, and 4 licensure. All interested MACTE members are encouraged to attend as schedules and travel permit.

February Forecast Shows Lowered Expectations. The February budget forecast was released on Thursday, February 28 and, as expected, shows lower rates of tax collection and lower projected economic activity in Minnesota. Even though a sizeable budget surplus is still projected, this less optimistic forecast will likely have an impact on budget targets to guide state spending in the next biennium.

Proposed Day at the Capitol. After discussion today, MEC is proposing that we build a day at the legislature this year during which MACTE attendees would focus on literacy issues in meetings with individual legislators. This is sparked in part by the bills introduced in both bodies with a focus on preparing teachers to identify and educate students with dyslexia but also by an interest in helping legislators better understand issues regarding literacy and reading based on solid research and guided by the expertise of our members. Liz Fogarty from UMTC and I will begin the planning for this day and will be reaching out soon to members who might be interested in participating in the day and on helping develop a brief document that we can leave with legislators and their staff.

And Don't Forget. Getting to know your local legislators and helping them understand key issues regarding teacher preparation and licensure is always important. Legislators frequently hold constituent meetings and/or offer times when constituents can meet with them. I encourage you to watch for and take advantage of such opportunities to help your members of the House and Senate learn about your programs, meet you and your students, and become better prepared to enact bills that can maintain high and consistent standards for your programs and graduates.