

**MACTE Legislative Update, 4.12.19**  
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**This is a two-week update** reflecting the extent of activity at the legislature over the past two weeks in advance of the third deadline for committee action on 4.12.19. Please note the immediate call to action at this critical time and do whatever you can to contact your state legislators, and especially state representatives, regarding issues of keen interest to MACTE.

**House Omnibus E-12 Bill Completed.** As reported at last week's MACTE meeting, the House Education Finance Division has completed the education omnibus bill, HF 2400, which includes both policy and funding provisions. There are many things to support in this bill, including an array of provisions advanced by the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers and changes to the tiered licensure system. Of particular note regarding licensure are decreases in the number of times that Tier 1 (one time) and Tier 2 (two times) can be renewed and improvements in the standards for achieving Tier 2, 3, and 4 licenses. There is also a provision to allow districts to affirm that Tier 3 teachers seeking Tier 4 licenses possess the necessary reading, writing, and mathematics skills in lieu of meeting the other existing basic skills standards.

Many statewide E-12 organizations and education reform groups oppose these changes, citing what they see as a loss of flexibility and negative impact on teachers of color. By contrast, Education Minnesota members and staff and MACTE testified that the changes would ensure that teachers are fully prepared and would have no more impact on candidates of color than any other teacher candidates, in part because the number of renewals of Tier 1 and 2 licenses would provide up to eight years for candidates to meet the new standards for a Tier 3 license.

**Senate Omnibus E-12 Bill Completed This Week.** The Senate E-12 Policy and Finance Committee released its "delete all" amendment late on Monday afternoon this week, reviewed it and took public testimony on Tuesday, and completed it on Wednesday. SF 7 does not include any of the changes to tiered licensure that are included in HF 2400 nor most of the recommendations advanced by the Coalition. Unfortunately, it does contain a number of very problematic provisions related to dyslexia, against which some of our reading specialists testified earlier this session. Many of these relate to requirements tying both teacher preparation programs and professional development to a limited number of entities and approaches to dyslexia (notably, Miller and Orton-Gillingham). You will find the dyslexia changes in various places in Article 3. The bill also includes a "B" grade from NCTQ in early reading instruction as a criteria for future CUE funding. I testified on behalf of MACTE in opposition to these provisions and noted the efforts of Senators Kent and Torres-Ray to address teacher licensure and diversity.

**Higher Education Bills Also Completed.** Work has also been completed on both the House and Senate higher education bills, HF 2544 and SF 2415. The Senate bill includes very little funding in support of teacher preparation, while the House bill funds many of the provisions advanced by TOCAIT. You may wish to review alerts from the Coalition for more details and suggestions for how to contact your legislators in support of the provisions in these bills, especially HF 2544.

**Time for Action.** We understand that the full House may take up HF 2400 on Tuesday, April 23, so **urge you to contact your state representative over the next week** with a simple message of support for the improvements it contains for tiered licensure. Here is a sample message to share by email, letter, or phone:

“I am contacting you to urge your support of HF 2400, the Omnibus E-12 Education Bill. In particular, I want to express my strong support for the changes to tiered licensure in Article 3. These changes will give Tier 1 and 2 teachers up to eight years to meet the new standards and will help ensure that Tier 3 and 4 teachers have met all of the standards and rules established by the legislature and PELS. This is important because many research studies show improved student learning when their teachers are well prepared. I also support the provisions designed to prepare a more diverse cadre of teachers for Minnesota classrooms.”

Please feel free to revise this to be more personalized. And should you have an opportunity for face-to-face communications with your representative while s/he is home for the Easter/Passover break, you can share this same message.

A message for senators is more complicated since we have concerns about provisions missing from the Senate bill as well as opposition to language in the bill. In addition, it has to be heard by the Senate Finance Committee and, I believe, the Senate Tax Committee before moving to the floor. With the legislature on break until Tuesday, April 23, it may be the following week before it is taken up by the full Senate. We will work on a short, clear message before then to share with you. In the meantime, if you have an opportunity to connect with your senator, you might urge them to consider adding licensure changes if they are introduced via amendments on the floor and notify them of your concerns about including provisions regarding dyslexia that limit programs and state funding to specific, private-sector providers that promote a single, limited approach to reading instruction.

At some point, we will also issue a call to action to contact Governor Walz. A key message to him will be one of support for the tiered licensure changes being advanced in HF 2400 for the reasons articulated above. We will be watchful for the best opportunities for likely impact with both legislative bodies and the governor and will be grateful for anything you can do to support the important issues being taken up by the legislature at this time. A small amount of effort can have a big impact, and I don't have to tell you how important the changes we are supporting will be to your students and your programs!