

MACTE Minute, 2.08.19 2019 MACTE Legislative Priorities

As the Minnesota legislature moves into the second month of the 2019 session, MACTE wants to take this opportunity to briefly share our thoughts on several issues that have already or may over the months ahead be taken up by legislators.

At last month's meeting, we described our support for some of the legislative priorities set forth by the Minnesota Rural Education Association, the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota, and Education Minnesota. We have subsequently shared with members of both House and Senate education committees the priority we have placed on supporting various recommendations being put forward by these three partners with a focus on addressing the teacher shortage in Minnesota. We know that increasing the supply of teachers will require an array of strategies, from recruitment and preparation through retention and professional support. We remain hopeful that by the end of the session, some important steps will have been taken to tackle our state's persistent and growing teacher shortage.

Another area of emerging legislative interest and concern for us is reading, and specifically dyslexia. While we welcome the attention of legislators to this critical topic, we will be urging caution about adding to already lengthy and detailed standards for licensure; taking actions with the potential of being overly prescriptive and/or narrow in identifying possible approaches for preparing teachers to teach reading to students with dyslexia and, by extension, to other students; and setting standards for relicensure that are workable and appropriate. We look forward to identifying areas of common interest and concern with you and other partners on these important issues as we all seek to help legislators understand the potential impact of their proposals and consider suggestions for alternative approaches. We are also preparing information for the Senate Education Committee addressing some of the reports presented to them at their Monday, January 28 hearing.

Two other areas on which we expect to devote attention during the 2019 session are special education licensure and the current statutory requirements for data reporting by teacher preparation programs. Our work in these areas is just beginning, and we will strive to ensure that, to the extent possible, our recommendations will be consistent with your own actions and priorities as we all seek to meet the needs of students, teachers, schools, and policymakers.

As always, we look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with you to ensure that Minnesota's standards for teacher licensure result in the preparation of both the quality and supply of teachers that our schools, students, and communities need and deserve.