

MACTE Legislative Update, 5.07.19
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Conference Committees Underway. On Monday, 5.06, conference committees started meeting to work out differences between the various omnibus bills passed by the House and Senate. The **E-12 Conference Committee** met yesterday afternoon to begin the work of crafting a single bill from HF 2400 and what was previously SF 7. House members are Jim Davnie, Cheryl Youakim, Dave Pinto, Julie Standstede, and Dean Urdahl. Senate members are Carla Nelson, Justin Eichorn, John Jasinski, Bill Weber, and Chuck Wiger. The committee began by taking testimony from and asking questions of Education Commissioner Mary Catherine Ricker and then did a “walk through” of a side-by-side comparison of all of the funding provisions. Today they will walk through the policy language side-by-side. In each of those documents, staff have identified changes that are either the same, similar, or different.

The **Higher Education Conference Committee** has also begun meeting. Its House members are Connie Bernardy, Laurie Pryor, Ben Lien, Ginny Klevorn, and Bud Nornes. Senate members include Paul Anderson, Rich Draheim, Scott Jensen, Jerry Relph, and Greg Clausen. The bills being reconciled are SF 2415 and what was HF 1711.

Call to Action. Time is short for conference committees to work through their difference in advance of the mandated adjournment date of May 20. As previously reported, the legislative leadership set a goal of having all conference committee bills completed by May 13, but since they hadn’t met their May 6 deadline of resolving funding targets as I am writing this, it seems unlikely that they will be able to meet that next self-imposed deadline. But since things can move quickly at this point in the session and since public testimony is generally not taken during conference committee meetings, **the time is now to contact conference committee members** in support of key positions that MACTE has taken this year. Our three chief concerns are:

- Support for the provisions in Article 3 of the House bill making needed changes in the tiered licensure system to ensure high standards for teacher licensure. We believe that the eight years that would still be provided under Tier 1 and 2 renewals to complete a preparation program or portfolio will allow sufficient flexibility for individuals who wish to become licensed teachers to achieve Tier 3 licensure.
- Support for the provisions in Article 3 of the House bill that will encourage and support a more diverse teaching force in Minnesota, including critical funding for teacher shortage loan forgiveness.
- Need to revise language in Article 3 of the Senate bill regarding teacher preparation and development requirements to effectively teach students with dyslexia by removing limits to just three approaches to teaching reading. Our primary concerns are that the effectiveness of these programs is unclear and that a single approach does not work for all students with dyslexia. In addition, we believe the current references to “scientifically-based” and “balanced” should be retained (rather than replaced with “evidence-based” and “structured”).

Feel free to craft a shorter version of the above points and call or email each member of the committee, and please share this broadly with others on your campus who might be willing to make these calls. Contacting Governor Walz’s office would also be helpful, since his folks will likely be very involved in the negotiations and/or in a position to speak to key issues of concern to the Governor. The Governor can be contacted at 651.201.3400 or 800.657.3717, or you can use a form that can be found at www.mn.gov.