

MACTE Legislative Update, 1.15.21
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Hello, MACTE members. The 2021 session of the Minnesota Legislature is now underway. It promises to be an unusual session, with all committee hearings currently taking place virtually; a significant focus of energy and attention on COVID-related issues; and access to the Capitol area currently restricted because of threats of violence. These are strange and unsettling times indeed.

In the face of these challenges, a small team of us will be working to ensure that our key issues are addressed during the session. As previously announced, I have reduced my time significantly, focusing primarily on tracking legislative activities and developments, and will be looking to a team representing each caucus to fulfill other responsibilities. Specifically, Sally Baas from Concordia University, Saint Paul; Kyena Cornelius from MSU, Mankato; and Laura Mogelson from the U of M Twin Cities comprise our 2021 working group. You can expect to hear regularly from the four of us as issues arise and contacts with legislators are needed as we seek to ensure high and realistic standards for teacher preparation and licensure.

Committee Leadership in 2021

While the education committee structure has remained the same in both the House and Senate this year, there have been some changes in leadership. *In the House*, Rep. Ruth Richardson from Mendota Heights, representing House District 52B, is now the chair of the Education Policy Committee. She previously served on the Education Finance Committee but has not served on the policy committee. The committee's usual meeting time is Mondays and Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. Rep. Jim Davnie from Minneapolis (HD 63A) remains as the chair of the Education Finance Committee. It meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. The Higher Education and Finance Committee is again being chaired by Rep. Connie Bernardy from New Brighton (HD 41A). Her committee meets on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m.

In the Senate, the Education Finance and Policy Committee is now being chaired by Senator Roger Chamberlain from Lino Lakes (SD 38). It meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. The Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee is chaired by David Tomassoni from Chisholm (SD 6). It meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.

Looking Ahead.

Bills are being introduced regularly and committees have begun holding virtual hearings but to date have not taken testimony, initially focusing on information gathering. We will be in touch when bills of interest to MACTE are introduced and hope that we can count on members to help us shape positions and testimony and take the steps needed to provide members with the research-based information that can help inform and potentially improve legislation as it is considered and moved toward action.