

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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February 2020 MACTE Minute

MACTE was pleased to co-sponsor an event at Southwest Minnesota State University in January focused on addressing the teacher shortage and teacher diversity in rural Minnesota. Governor Walz joined us to provide the opening address and a commitment to support these efforts. We know that you share our concern about the state's ability to attract, prepare, and retain a sufficient quantity of well-prepared teachers to serve in classrooms across the state and a teaching force that reflects the diversity of the students in those classrooms. We were pleased that Tyra Reck joined us to present information summarized from PELSB's Supply and Demand Report and Tiered Licensure Report for this important discussion.

At the January convening, the group used an approach developed by our co-sponsor, the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership, to identify barriers and solutions in four categories: explore, become, grow, and thrive. These reflect a continuum from recruiting individuals into teaching and preparing them to begin their teaching careers to helping them grow within the communities in which they live and teach and thriving in their chosen profession. Some of the strategies identified reflect ideas to improve or build upon work already underway or in development across the state, like opportunities for middle and high school students to explore teaching and Grow-Your-Own programs, and while others have emerged as new approaches worth further consideration, including new alumni mentoring and community partnership programs and housing subsidies. In addition, some actions can be undertaken with existing funding and under current rule and statute, while others will require new funding and consideration of changes in policy and practice.

Many of the strategies and approaches identified as needed and appropriate in a rural context are the same as, or similar to, those in urban and suburban settings. As a result, much of the work of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers, while sometimes seen as focused primarily on the Twin Cities metropolitan area, is applicable in rural contexts as well. We also know that many rural communities are much more racially and ethnically diverse than was the case in the past, and therefore focuses on culturally responsive practices, cultural competence, and language challenges are as essential in Worthington and Willmar as they are in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

As we move into the 2020 legislative session, MACTE and all of its member colleges and universities stand ready to collaborate with you and other partners who share our commitment to setting and implementing high standards for the teaching profession and supporting rules, policies, and legislation that will help districts throughout the state serve all of their students by ensuring the quantity, quality, and diversity of teachers needed to deliver on the promise of education for all Minnesota students.