

MACTE 2021 Legislative Summary

This report provides a short summary of the 2021 Minnesota legislative session as it relates to our work in teacher education as members of the Minnesota Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. This report was prepared by Laura Mogelson (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities). Laura is a member of the 2021 MACTE legislative liaison working group.

The 2021 Legislative session started on January 5, 2021 and the regular session ended in mid May. A special session was held to wrap up the final agreements of the budget bills before wrapping up in early July. The Minnesota legislature is divided, with a DFL governor, the DFL controlling the House of Representatives, and the GOP controlling the Senate. Given our divided government, we entered the session knowing that passing bills and agreeing on the budget would be a challenge. MACTE had four overarching legislative priorities going into the session ([2020-2021 MACTE Legislative Priorities](#)). The full language of the bills signed into law by Governor Walz are available online and linked here: [HF2 \(PK-12 Education omnibus bill\)](#) and [HF7 \(Higher Education omnibus bill, is linked here.](#)

Our first legislative priority was to maintain high quality standards for teacher preparation. Much of this was aligned to the legislation proposed by PELSB. We supported the proposal to improve the Tier 2 licensure requirements by removing completion of coursework and two years of teaching as pathways to Tier 3 licensure. In the final version of the bill that includes the teacher licensure legislation, no changes to licensure were incorporated and the licensure system remains unchanged.

Our second priority was to support legislation to increase the diversity of Minnesota's teaching force through strategies to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers of color. We supported the recommendations of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers, including Grow Your Own grant programs and the Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color grant program. [Click here to see the Coalition's detailed breakdown of what was proposed and passed.](#) The largest increase in funding went to the Grow Your Own grant programs with an increase from \$1.5 million to \$6.5 million annually. There are also important changes to note in this grant program that is administered by MDE. Starting on July 1, 2021, at least 80% of the grant funds for tuition scholarships or stipends benefiting school employees or community members affiliated with a district must go to people of color or American Indians. There is also greater flexibility in the type of program/provider a district can partner with to be eligible to receive scholarship funds.

Our third area of focus was on reducing barriers for candidates to become teachers. We supported providing financial assistance to candidates to meet program and licensure requirements with an emphasis on grants and loan forgiveness programs. The MN Student Teacher Candidate Grants saw a modest increase in funding. This program is administered by the Office of Higher Education.

Finally, we supported opportunities to increase PreK-12 student learning and achievement,

including the support of high quality research-based reading preparation/instruction. The signed legislation included the allocation of \$3 million in one-time funding to provide Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling Grants (LETRS) training for 1,200 Minnesota teachers. At the time of this report, it is not clear whether “LETRS” meets the definition of “high quality research-based reading preparation/instruction.”

The next regular legislative session will occur in early 2022. In the even numbered years, the legislature convenes on a date set by joint agreement of both bodies. Since it won't be a budget year, there is an opportunity to focus on policy changes, including provisions around teacher licensure and areas we support aligned to the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian teachers.