



February 5, 2021

Chair Richardson
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for HF561 Requiring Districts Have Mentorship Program

Dear Chair Richardson and members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of HF561, which would require districts and charter schools to develop teacher mentoring programs. High-quality teacher mentorship programs have been proven to increase teacher retention and job satisfaction,¹ and can also lead to better instructional practices that result in increased student achievement.² In fact, in a survey of over 300 national and state teachers of the year, an effective adult mentor teacher ranked among the top three experiences in developing their effectiveness as a teacher.³

In 2017, the Professional Educator and Licensing Standards Board (PELSB) passed a rule that requires all teachers participate in the employing district or charter school's mentorship program in order to maintain their licensure. However, neither statute nor rule requires a district or charter school to have a mentorship program. State law only encourages schools to have them.

We believe that this bill provides a solution to the current conflict between statute and rule. With teachers currently required to participate in mentorship and schools only encouraged to provide it, many teachers can find themselves unable to renew their licenses through no fault of their own.

We hope the committee will advance this important bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Shaver".

Matt Shaver
Policy Director

¹ Gray, L., Taie, S. & O'Rear, I. (April 2015). "Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility in the First Five Years: Results from the First through Fifth Waves of the 2007-2008 Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study." National Center for Education Statistics.

² Empson, L. (June 2017). "Students Gain up to Five Months of Additional Learning When New Teachers Receive High-Quality Mentoring." New Teacher Center.

³ Behrstock-Sherratt, E., Bassett, K., Olson, D. & Jacques, C. (April 2014). "From Good to Great: Exemplary Teachers Share Perspectives on Increasing Teacher Effectiveness Across the Career Continuum." American Institutes for Research.