



March 21, 2024

Re: HF3803, Stipends required to be paid to student teachers

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance Committee,

Last year, EdAllies convened a group of once-aspiring teachers of color to dig deep into their experiences and the barriers that prevented them from turning their goal to become a licensed educator into reality. They cited many themes, but one of the most tangible was the challenge of unpaid student teaching.

We are grateful to see several proposals before the legislature this year, in both the K-12 and higher education committees, to address this at the systems level. As you know, most teacher licensure programs require a 12-week, unpaid student teaching experience—a reality that can present a career-ending barrier before their career has even begun for candidates who simply cannot afford to work without a wage for three months. This barrier is particularly acute for non-traditional students, who may be changing careers, enrolled in school part-time, or supporting a family while completing teacher prep.

We hope the committee will prioritize expanding subsidies for student teaching—and to the extent that there are limited resources, we encourage that this be done through an equity lens, starting with underrepresented teachers of color to support the years-long effort to increase teacher diversity in the state. The underrepresented student teacher grant program is one existing strategy to address this need, but the investment falls short of even this targeted need. Moreover, we know the benefit of deeper year-long residency models and have the opportunity to invest there as well.

With many options in the mix, the bottom line is that student teaching is a tangible financial barrier to the profession that legislators can remove with modest investment, meeting the need for our most underrepresented teachers and building from there. We thank you for considering this bill and urge the committee to make an equity-minded investment through this year's supplemental budget.

Sincerely,
Matt Shaver
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