



2/27/2026

Re: Support of HF3635 the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

I am Jimmy Adams. I am the Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC).

We know that teachers don't move very often, but when they do, it is typically because of life circumstances such as a spouse being transferred, be it military or other employment, or possibly to care for an aging relative. Whatever the circumstance, they find it difficult to obtain a license due to state specific requirements such as having to take an additional graduate course or taking a content assessment. These things can be costly, and they do not recognize years of professional experience by the teacher. We have found that many leave the profession as a result.

For over 95 years, NASDTEC has worked to improve the portability of educator licenses. In 1965 NASDTEC established the first agreement between states to support educators who were relocating across state lines. Since then, the agreements between states have had many names. Our current version is known as the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement. This agreement was successful in that it opened lines of communication and resulted in established agreements regarding the minimum requirements for a professional license, but the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement is not reciprocity, it is not binding on the jurisdiction, and it is not an interstate compact.

Thanks to funding through the Department of Defense and technical support from the Council on State Government's National Center for Interstate Compacts, NASDTEC was selected to serve as the host for states interested in using an interstate compact to facilitate the portability of educator licenses.

The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, which you are discussing today as HF3635, allows each member state to identify those high-level licenses within their state that meet the same level of professionalism as in other states where the professional teacher holds a bachelor's degree, has completed a state approved education preparation program with no outstanding requirements, and is subject to a criminal records background check by the receiving state. By meeting these criteria, the receiving state can issue an equivalent or close to equivalent license based on the three components of content, grade range, and student population, eliminating the overhead of processing paperwork and delays due to the teacher having to provide additional verifying documentation, already verified by the sending state.

Through the Compact, states maintain their autonomy and have full control over the licenses they issue. The compact simply creates a streamlined process by which a teacher can receive a license and become eligible for employment. This is a win-win, as professional educators gain increased mobility which is consistent with being a professional, and states benefit from a wider door for effective educators and reclaiming those who left the profession rather than trying to navigate the out-of-state requirements for licensure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

James W. Adams
Executive Director
NASDTEC



**Testimony of Patrick Baker, Western Governors University
House Education Policy Committee
March 3, 2026**

Chair Bennett, Chair Jordan and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Patrick Baker, and I serve as the Government Relations Director for the School of Education at Western Governors University (WGU). When I'm not doing my day job, I also am proud to serve on the School Board for the Mankato Area Public Schools.

I am here to voice WGU's strong support for both pieces of legislation before you today: HF3638, which would expand Tier 2 licensure eligibility to candidates enrolled in out-of-state approved teacher preparation programs, and HF3635, authorizing Minnesota to join the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact.

As some of you may be unfamiliar with WGU, I'd like to start by providing a brief overview of our University

Who We Are & Who We Serve

WGU was founded by 19 U.S. governors nearly 30 years ago as a nonprofit, affordable, online university with a specific mission: to create pathways to opportunity for working adults. One of the key differentiators for WGU is that our programs are entirely competency-based. We hold learning constant and time variable. WGU now enrolls more than 200,000 students seeking degrees and certificates in health care, business, IT, and teaching and counts more than 425,000 graduates.

But teaching is what brings me to you today. WGU operates the largest teachers college in the country, with 45,000 students currently enrolled. Last year alone, our School of Education graduated nearly 20,000 individuals, including 270 right here in Minnesota. We are proud to be the only teachers college in the country that can license teachers in all 50 states and that is accredited by both national accreditors: CAEP and AAQEP.

Our footprint in Minnesota is significant and unique. We currently have nearly 300 Minnesotans enrolled in programs leading to initial teacher licensure. These are not your typical college students. They are working adults who reflect the modern teacher workforce:

- 70% are over the age of 25.
- 80% are working while enrolled at WGU.
- 85% transferred in prior college credit.

Most importantly for this committee, WGU is a vital pipeline for Greater Minnesota. 46% of our initial licensure students reside in rural areas, representing 69 of Minnesota's 87 counties.

Support for Tier 2 Licensure Expansion

We strongly support the provision in HF3638 that would make students enrolled in out-of-state approved programs eligible for Tier 2 licenses. Currently, despite our students being eligible to apply directly to PELSB for a Tier 3 license upon program completion, they are barred from accessing a Tier 2 license while they train.

This exclusion creates an inequitable barrier for the Minnesotans who need these pathways most. Specifically, we have 80 current students who entered WGU with a non-teaching bachelor's degree. Because they cannot access a Tier 2 license, their pathway to the classroom is less accessible than their peers at in-state institutions.

This barrier has real-world consequences for Minnesota school districts:

1. **Pipeline Grants:** WGU is a higher education partner to school districts utilizing MDE's Special Educator Pipeline Grants. The inability of candidates utilizing this grant—who are often serving as Special Education teachers of record in classrooms today—to access Tier 2 licensure is a significant hurdle to ensuring these students can continue to work in their classroom while obtaining their Tier 3 license.
2. **Teach for America:** WGU and Teach for America Twin Cities are hoping to partner to help their TFA cadets complete a teacher preparation program and secure full licensure. The current restriction on Tier 2 licenses is a major barrier to moving that partnership forward.

Today Minnesotans have access to more high-quality teacher preparation programs than ever before – both Minnesota-based and programs approved in other states WGU. By limiting Tier 2 access to in-state institutions, Minnesota is unnecessarily making the pathway to teacher licensure for qualified, working Minnesotans harder and more inaccessible at a time when we need a diverse pool of future teachers more than ever.

Support for the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

Finally, WGU urges the committee to support Minnesota joining the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. As an institution operating nationwide, we see firsthand how licensure barriers prevent qualified teachers from filling vacancies where they are needed most. The Compact preserves Minnesota's high standards while ensuring that a qualified teacher in one state can seamlessly become a qualified teacher in Minnesota.

Conclusion

We ask for your support on both bills to modernize Minnesota's licensure landscape as they will have an important impact on ensuring that every student has access to a qualified teacher.

Thank you.



WGCU confidential/proprietary documents should not be copied or redistributed.

Our Mission

To change lives for the better by creating pathways to opportunity.

A Bit of History...

Founded by Governors

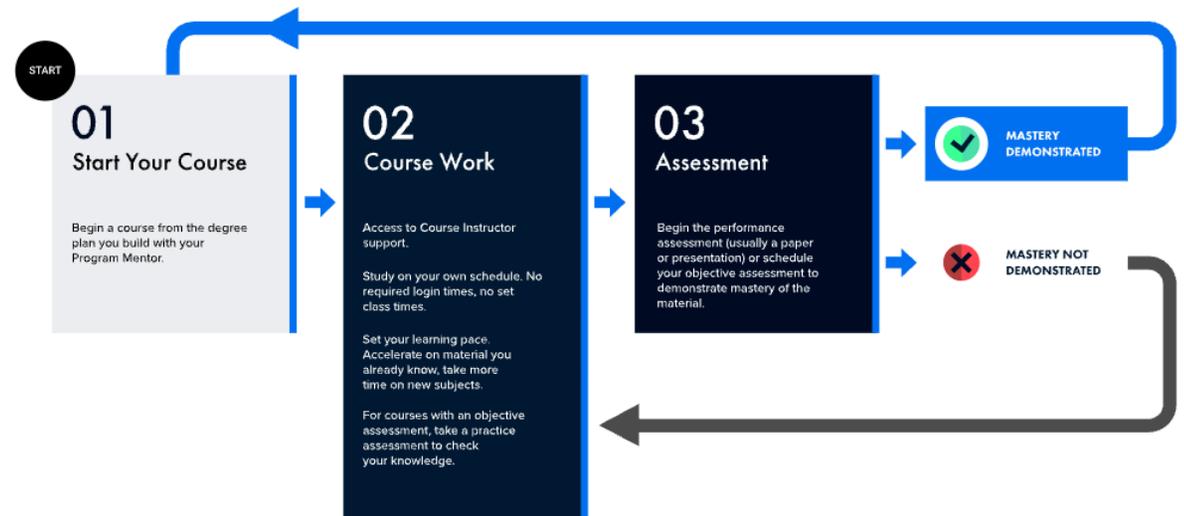
- 1996 – 19 Western Governors
- Nonprofit
- Online
- Competency-Based
- Affordable
- Serve Working Adult Learners

The WGU Difference

Competency-Based Education

Recognizes people have different levels of knowledge and learn at different rates

- Hold learning constant, let time vary
- Advance when mastery demonstrated
- Personalize and adapt learning path
- Focus on relevance and outcomes



Personalized Learning | Specialized Faculty

Curriculum & Assessment Developers

- Design curriculum, assessments to defined learning outcomes
- Select and develop course materials

Program Mentors

- Dedicated, program-level SMEs providing 1:1 support across program journey

Course Instructors

- Provide individualized instruction interventions as students work thru courses
- Lead group sessions / study groups to dive deep on critical concepts or big ideas

Evaluators & Clinical Faculty

- Evaluate and validate student competency, providing individualized feedback

Tuition Model

- Flat Rate – all you can learn in 6 months (12 CU minimum)
- \$4,025 per term for Bachelor's
- \$4,325 per term for Master's

WGU School of Education

Accredited Programs

Initial Licensure

- Elementary Education (BA & MAT)
- Special Education (BA & MAT)
- Elementary Education & Special Education Dual Licensure (BA)
- Secondary Math (BS & MAT)
- Secondary Biological Science (BS & MAT)
- Secondary Chemistry (BS & MAT)
- Secondary Earth Science (BS & MAT)
- Secondary Physics (BS & MAT)
- Secondary English (MAT only)
- Secondary Social Studies (MAT only)



WGU Also Offers Advanced Programs

- Educational Leadership
- Education Technology and Instructional Design
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Masters for licensed teachers

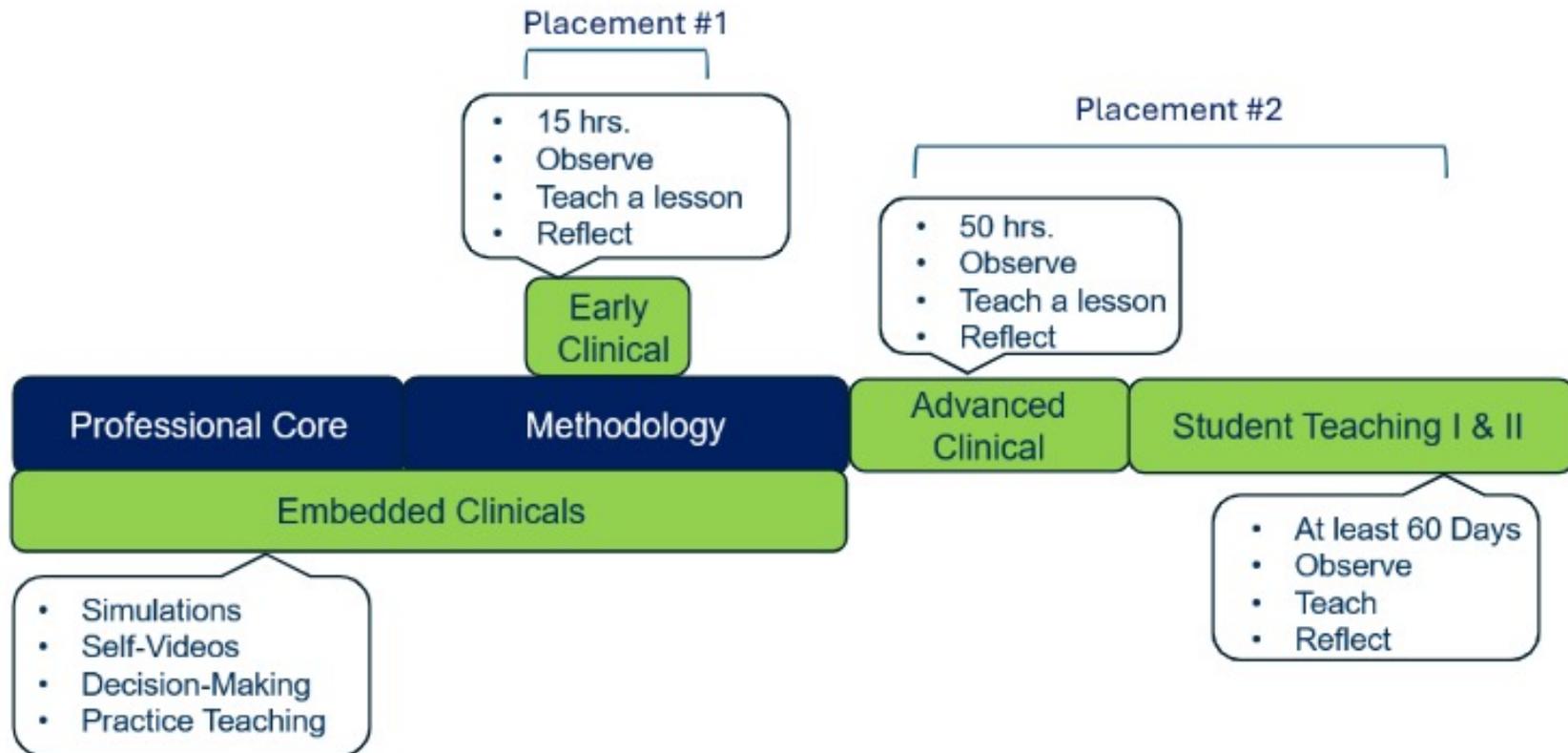
The Reimagination Project

- **Science of Learning**
- Course Design and Universal Accommodations
- Focus on “Doing” – Teaching in multiple courses
- Competency-Based Education (P-12)
- Healthy Learning and Cultural Intelligence
- Professional Dispositions and Ethics
- Critical Thinking, Flexibility, Adaptability
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Literacy (Science of Reading)
- Professionalism
- Online Pedagogy and AI
- Flexible course pathways for Apprenticeships

HOW
SPIRAL
CURRICULUM
HELPS MINIMIZE GAPS IN LEARNING



Clinical Framework



Apprenticeship & Grow Your Own

- WGU partnered with several states on funded teacher apprentice and grow your own programs.
- Over 50 Minnesotans enrolled at WGU utilizing Special Education Pipeline Grants from MDE.
- Over 2,000 students participating, 500+ already graduated

WGU in Minnesota

WGU Student Profile in Minnesota

- **2,000 – Total Minnesota Students**
- **465 – School of Education Students**
- **293 – Enrolled in Initial Licensure Programs**
 - 69% over 25
 - 28% first gen college
 - 47% household income under \$65K
 - 13% students of color
 - 85% transferred prior college credit (40% SCND)
 - 79 students with prior bachelors degree
 - 81% receiving financial aid
 - 82% working (66% full time)
 - 46% rural (students in 69 of 87 MN counties)

**WGU School of Education
Graduates in Minnesota**

1,550+

Licensure in Minnesota

- WGU School of Education students apply directly to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board for a Tier 3 license following completion of WGU's out-of-state approved program.
- WGU students are not currently eligible for a Tier 2 license.

WGU Ready to Partner



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