

February 28, 2024

Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in regard to HF3782. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) is responsible for establishing the state standards required to be a licensed teacher in Minnesota and for overseeing the state's teacher licensure programs. One of PELSB's legislative priorities this session is to support policy measures that meet the needs of Minnesota's students and schools. HF3782 works towards this goal by ensuring all special education teachers receive the training and support necessary to serve students.

All of Minnesota's students deserve well-trained teachers who have the knowledge and skills needed to support them. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that special education teachers are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including having the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities. The federal law acknowledges multiple ways that a teacher could receive this preparation and training, whether through traditional or alternative licensure routes. For teachers who use an alternative route, such as those who obtain a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license in special education, IDEA requires that the teacher:

“(A) receives high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction, before and while teaching;

(B) participates in a program of intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers or a teacher mentoring program;

(C) assumes functions as a teacher only for a specified period of time not to exceed three years; and

(D) demonstrates satisfactory progress toward full certification as prescribed by the State.”

In Minnesota, teachers may become special education teachers through a number of

pathways. While most of our special education teachers receive training through a teacher preparation program, some enter the field without that training. Codifying the requirements in IDEA ensures that all special education teachers receive the necessary support to successfully serve Minnesota's students and brings Minnesota into compliance with the legal requirements set forth in IDEA section 612(a)(14) and C.F.R. 300.156.

In closing, we would like to reiterate PELSB's support for HF3782 and encourage committee members to vote in support of it as well.

Sincerely,



Yelena Bailey, Ph.D.

PELSB, Executive Director



Angela Osuji, Ph.D.

PELSB, Chair



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Chair Steve Cwodzinski
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Chair Pryor and Chair Cwodzinski,

On behalf of our organizations, we thank you for the opportunity to share our support and concerns with HF 3782/ SF 3567.

First in Article 1, Section 3, we support and thank the Governor for the one year delay in implementing the course in government and citizenship. That helps our districts a great deal.

Second, Article 2, Section 5, Subd 2 (9), we believe this provision would be better placed outside of the World's Best Workforce statute. The World's Best Workforce was designed to be a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan. Effective communication with students and families is a top priority for school districts and we agree with the intent of this proposal, but we believe it would be better placed in another section of statute.

Finally, we wish to address Article 6, Section 2. Terry Morrow, MSBA Director of Policy and Legal Services has been working with and suggested language to the Department. As of the date of this letter, we understand that discussions are continuing and there is consensus on language.

Respectfully,

Denise Dittrich, Government Relations, Minnesota School Boards Association
Scott Croonquist, Executive Director, Association of Metropolitan School Districts
Deb Henton, Executive Director, Minnesota Association of School Administrators
Roger Aronson, Legal and Legislative Counsel, Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association and Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals