



LAKES INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE ACADEMY

An IB World School

February 15, 2023

Testimony, HF1224

From: Shannon Peterson, Executive Director,
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I was educated in a Minnesota teacher preparation program. I taught for years here and abroad and also worked for a time for a public teacher's union. I am not against formal teacher preparation and am proud of the education I received at Minnesota State University Moorhead. However, I also know through years of experience that a degree from a Minnesota teacher preparation program is not the only way to become a great teacher. And right now, Minnesota needs as many great teachers as we can get.

I am against removing the pathway from Tier 2 to Tier 3 based on three years of successful experience in the classroom at Tier 2. Particularly in these times of severe teacher shortages, this change would hurt schools, and more importantly, by perpetuating the teacher shortage it would harm students.

As the Executive Director of an authorized International Baccalaureate school, offering IB to our 1400 PreK-12 students, and teaching via language immersion in the elementary grades, our international staff are invaluable. These teachers are highly qualified, with experience, a bachelor's, and often a master's degree earned in their home countries. Yet, they start out on a Tier 2 license when they come to Minnesota. Forced to enroll in and pay for another teacher preparation program would simply not work; these teachers would return home rather than spend time and money on an expensive US college degree.

As a chartered public school, our funding is such that often the most highly qualified Minnesota-licensed teachers who are also proficient in one of our immersion languages receive significantly larger offers from district public schools who access to property tax levies, and other funds that are not available to charters, allow them to pay more. Therefore, due to funding and subsequent pay inequities, even many of our local hires start out on a Tier 2 license at our school.

Our school currently has 110 teachers, 32 of whom are on a Tier 2 license. Of these, 24 have moved here from a Spanish or Chinese-speaking country, and all with education degrees and teaching experience in their home countries. They look forward to the small pay increase that we offer with each higher licensure tier.

I ask that you continue offering the pathway to Tier 3 licensure via three years of successful experience at Tier 2.



