

Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in regard to HF 3554. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) oversees the state standards required to be a licensed teacher in Minnesota and facilitates the approval process for all teacher preparation providers and programs in Minnesota.

One of PELSB's primary goals is to grow, support, and diversify Minnesota's educator workforce. Supporting and expanding alternative pathways to teacher licensure is key to achieving this goal.

When the legislature initially provided grant funds to support alternative providers, PELSB worked closely with the Office of Higher Education to allocate dollars to five prospective providers. At that time, the provider approval process was under old administrative rule and PELSB worked closely with these providers to support them through the approval process. Today, four of the five grant recipients have been approved by PELSB and two providers have candidates enrolled in their programs.

Since then, PELSB has revised its approval process and standards for providers to ensure that all teacher preparation providers in Minnesota – whether based in an institute of higher education or a non-profit, school district, or charter school - meet the same high standards. As part of this effort, PELSB removed many old regulations that served as barriers to alternative preparation. The success of newly approved alternative teacher preparation providers has garnered greater interest in this pathway. HF 3554 offers the support needed to continue expanding alternative pathways.

Currently, two prospective providers are in the process of seeking approval, with even more in consultation with PELSB. All agree that to meet the high standards set in Minnesota for preparation providers and future teachers, initial start-up funds are essential in building the infrastructure to start their programs. Again, HF 3554 would ensure these programs are financially supported so the State's efforts to expand innovative teacher preparation pathways can continue.

PELSB supports the reallocation of funds for alternative providers and welcomes the opportunity to engage with prospective providers and guide them through the approval process to ensure we continue to expand options for all types of future teacher seeking licensure in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Alex Liuzzi

PELSB, Executive Director



Brian Rappe

PELSB, Chair