



Minnesota

Association of School Personnel Administrators

1430 Concordia Ave #4855, St. Paul, MN 55104

March 9, 2021

Chair Richardson and Members of House Education Policy Committee:

Although Minnesota Association of School Personnel Administrators (“MASPA”) supports many components of HF1081DE1, we write to express three major concerns with the proposed bill: (1) changing the structure of the tiered licensure system by eliminating the bridge between tier two and tier three licensure; (2) providing teachers in a fee-based program, early childhood family education, with continuing contract rights; and (3) expanding the mandatory subjects of collective bargaining to include class size, student testing, and other personnel ratios.

Elimination of the “Bridge”, Lines 68.22-68.25

These lines remove the tier two to tier three “bridge” for teachers who have successfully taught for at least three years and have had positive summative reviews by the district.

This year is the third year that school district human resources departments have implemented the tiered licensure system with PELSB rulemaking occurring in late 2018. We believe that a structural change at this early stage would cause confusion for our school districts and our administrators working closely with currently licensed tier two teachers, and also our tier two teachers who are working towards tier three licensure.

School districts have reached out to MASPA with their stories of tier two licensed teachers who are utilizing this alternative pathway to obtaining tier three licensure – at least three years of successful teaching experience. They report teachers that are excelling in their positions – many in now their third year of teaching experience under this new law – that would be impacted by the proposed changes being offered.

MASPA is also concerned about the impact of the proposed change on efforts towards creating a more diverse teacher workforce. Looking at PELSB “2020 Tiered License and Permissions Report” data, teachers of color made up 21.09 percent of Tier 1 teachers, 21.28 percent of Tier 2 teachers, 8.46 percent of Tier 3 teachers, and 4.89 percent of Tier 4 teachers.” When a tier two licensed teacher of color has demonstrated good teaching through evaluation, why would we, as a state, require them to go either back to higher education or through the portfolio process (onerous, time consuming, unpredictable), to demonstrate something they have already showed the school district?

At MASPA, we believe that qualified and trained school administrators are in the best position to ensure that all teachers, including tier two teachers, are meeting the rigorous expectations that we require from all teachers. All teachers, whether tier one, two, three, or four, are regularly coached and evaluated by school administrators with advanced education to recognize excellent teaching. This process is an established part of determining whether a teacher will achieve continuing contract rights and taken very seriously by school administrators.

It is also important to note that we are talking about a very small percentage of teachers. Anoka-Hennepin, our state’s largest school district, reports fewer than 1.5% of all teacher positions filled with tier one or tier two licensed teachers. These tier two teachers are often actors teaching acting, dancers teaching dancing, and police officers teaching law enforcement. But these positions may go unfilled in the long run if these proposed changes are adopted.

We ask that you trust our school district administrators and human resources professionals to fulfill our missions to help students learn and grow by ensuring that the best teachers are in our classrooms.

Expanding to ECFE Teachers Continuing Contract Rights, Lines 74.28 – 75.10

By separating the previous provision into two separate paragraphs and providing the exemption only to the second paragraph, ECFE teachers would now be eligible for continuing contract/tenure rights under Minn. Stat. §122A.40 or Minn. Stat. §122A.41. We believe that this change needs careful, transparent vetting as the majority of our ECFE programs are parent-driven, fee-based programs distinct from our K-12 education programs. This issuance of continuing contract status to ECFE teachers would be problematic when enrollment ebbs and flows within the school year and from one year to another year.

Expanding the Subjects of Mandatory Bargaining, Lines 95.15 - 95.17

These lines change the definition of “terms and conditions of employment” to include class size, student testing, and student-personnel ratios. As the human resources professionals in our districts, we typically negotiate labor relations contracts for our school boards, negotiating the mandatory subjects of bargaining, which are the terms and conditions of employment. The addition of these terms to the definition significantly changes the scope of bargaining with all of bargaining groups. Our local school boards are currently provided with the authority to set class size, student testing parameters, and other student-personnel ratios. The proposed language preempts their school board rights and fiscal management authority.

One other small point of note: lines 76.15 to 76.17 would provide out-of-state teachers access to continuing contract/tenure status earlier than similarly-situated, in-state teachers (i.e. an in-state teacher who has taught for three years in three separate in-state districts would not have access to a one year probationary period).

Who are we? MASP is a group of human resource professionals working in public school districts across this state serving teachers, administrators, support staff, and our amazing students. Human resource professionals establish and oversee the hiring processes in school districts with the intent of always selecting the best, most talented teacher candidates to put in front of our students. We look for teachers that have a drive to teach and a mission to help students learn and grow. Helping our schools obtain and maintain the best possible teachers for each and every classroom is where we feel the most honor in our work – and where we know we can have the largest impact on the academic achievements of our students.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Best regards,

The Board of the Minnesota Association of School Personnel Administrators

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