



March 1, 2021

The Honorable Ruth Richardson  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
403 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Richardson and Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Business Partnership has deep concerns with provisions in HF 1376 that would not only reverse years of work to reform Minnesota's teacher licensure system but also, and most concerningly, adversely impact teachers of color.

Minnesota's tired licensure system was created to provide transparency, making it easier for prospective teachers to understand what they need to do to earn a license. The new tiered teacher licensure system is the product of extensive bipartisan work, with stakeholder engagement, to replace a system the Legislative Auditor characterized as "broken". The new licensure system not only enjoys broad support, but it is important that it have time to operate – not only to provide consistency in policy, but to gather information to better inform future actions.

**The changes to the tiered licensure system proposed by HF 1376 would eliminate pathways to licensure and push great teachers out of classrooms.** The proposed changes would remove pathways to licensure by: 1) no longer allowing candidates to qualify for a Tier 2 license based on completing a menu of requirements, and 2) removing the pathway to Tier 3 licensure based on teaching experience and good evaluations. These changes not only would push out existing high-quality educators needed in classrooms but also would make it more difficult for schools to hire and retain great teachers. Furthermore, this bill would eliminate language ensuring unlimited renewals for Tier 1 educators who teach in shortage areas. This would adversely impact schools trying to fill shortage areas and take us back to short-term variances that could be pulled at any time.

Teacher diversity is critical to closing education gaps. Lifting up great educators and supporting diversification of the teaching corps will improve classroom instruction for all learners. However, **dismantling the tiered licensure system would have significant adverse impacts on teacher diversity.** The changes proposed by HF 1376 would disproportionately impact teachers of color – at least 21% of teachers who hold a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license are teachers of color. Closing these pathways would push these teachers out of classrooms at a time we need them the most.

For Minnesota to continue to have the world-class skilled workforce that has been a cornerstone of our competitive business climate, we must ensure that students are graduating with the skills needed for success. Ensuring an effective teacher at the front of every classroom is key to elevating academic performance for all students. Minnesota's existing tiered licensure system was designed to provide multiple pathways to licensure and ensure we have effective teachers in our classrooms. We encourage you to continue to improve tiered licensure, but because many of the provisions in this bill dismantle key components of the tiered system, we urge you to reject HF 1376.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Amy Walsten in black ink.

Education and Workforce Development Director  
Minnesota Business Partnership