

Introduction

Thank you Madame Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Kristin Dehmer, I am the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Administrative Services for the Moorhead Area Public Schools. I am speaking today in opposition to HF 1224, and the proposed changes to tiered licensure. The Tier 2 pathway recognizes successful teaching experience in the classroom and provides qualified teachers that have the knowledge and experience in subjects such as science, math, Special Education, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) .

Misconceptions regarding the removal of the Tier 2 to 3 pathway were presented to the committee today and in a previous meeting. From my experience, these are not misconceptions, but factual outcomes of additional licensure barriers.

This will remove teachers from the classroom as Tier 1 and 2 have no protections for continuing contracts, which is not sustainable for long-term employment. With required posting requirements, a district would be required to lay off licensed Tier 1 and 2 teachers and hire a teacher with teacher preparation coursework regardless of experience or effectiveness.

This could harm teachers or applicants of color as any removal of a pathway which eliminates barriers to licensure could harm historically marginalized communities. This pathway is not a means to hold individuals to a lesser standard, but to eliminate a barrier, similar to HF 1257, which removes a potential testing barrier through an alternative pathway.

This does fail to consider district hiring concerns. Applications eligible for the pathway can often only be approved due to lack of candidates with teacher preparation or extensive reasoning on why those candidates are not qualified. The messaging has been clear to districts, ineffective applicants with teacher preparation could hinder the hire and licensing of effective Tier 1 or Tier 2 applicants.

There is a misconception that there are significant deficits in classroom management without teacher preparation coursework. In review of one approved MN preparation program, there is not a single class focusing on classroom management. However, districts such as mine provide support and professional development to provide classroom management tools regardless of tier or experience and recognize and support needs and improvement across all participants.

In closing, I urge you to reconsider HF 1224. Eliminating this pathway will make an already significant teacher shortage more urgent and will leave districts without teachers. Teachers who bring knowledge and experience that benefit our programs and most of all, our students.

Thank you for your time.