

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing you regarding the Tiered Teaching Licensure Law as implemented in July 2018, and the subsequent initiative HF1376, which alters the law.

I am a Spanish language teacher who has thankfully been able to teach in Minnesota public schools via a Tier 2 teaching license. This license has provided me the ability to employ my experience as an educator in the Minnesota public education system. Over the last year and a half, this opportunity to teach has meant the world to me. I have been thriving in my teaching position and the reviews that I have received have been remarkable -on par, or exceeding those of many of my "traditionally" licensed colleagues.

Despite my teaching experience, degrees, credentials, and impact on students, HF1376 would take away my Tier 2 license.

I was able to effectively pursue this degree based on my professional and academic background, which I will briefly describe: I hold a BA in Latin American Studies from Macalester College and a Master's in Education from Hamline University. I have also been the lead administrator in a small business that conducts itself in both Spanish and English. Regarding experience as a Spanish educator, I have been teaching for around 15 years. I began working in private school language departments as a substitute teacher (while completing my master's), then moved to work in public high schools, and then at the post-secondary level. My work in public schools has continued to date, where I have been able to teach 1st through 12th grade and with great success.

Prior to acquiring the Tier 2 license, I had considered the option of pursuing a license through licensure via portfolio, but was thoroughly dissuaded by the difficulty and endless roads of bureaucracy involved. Also, through my research with administrators, I was alerted to the logistical roadblocks that have consistently been presented for this pathway, by the fact that "rules and regulations are consistently in flux." The Tiered system finally allowed a person in my situation, with a diverse academic background and teaching experience (not to mention life experience), to responsibly be considered to teach in our great MN public schools.

I represent one of many educators in the community, who have not completed a traditional licensure program but have been able to make a case for our abilities and contribute as effective teachers. Many of us are highly educated and holistically experienced in our fields. We are also able to contribute in the classroom to a level that equals or surpasses that of our colleagues and thus contribute at a high-level for our wonderful students.

Having held my license for a 3 years now, I recently contacted PELSB with questions regarding the renewal of my license. It was my understanding that the law states this license would be renewable up to three times, and I would be eligible for a Tier 3 license after three years of successful teaching. I was told that the Legislature is

already discussing changing the law, and that bills like HF 1376 would not only close the pathways I plan to use to reach Tier 3 licensure, but also take away my Tier 2 licensure. I wholeheartedly believe the Legislature and PELSB must commit to following the Tiered licensure law as it was carefully crafted so that I have the certainty I need within the profession.

Should HF 1376 pass into law, my professional life will now be effectively, ridiculously, and unfairly derailed. There is no current empirical evidence to suggest that any changes to the law would result in more effective or diverse educators. This, in my opinion, is unfair and unacceptable –unfair to those of us who have embraced and committed to a law that was offered to us by the state, and have “worked our tails off” to show that we are worthy and effective in the classroom. Changes are unacceptable and an affront to those who worked so hard to amend the previous laws regarding teacher licensure to create a new system to attract diverse and great educators, even though they might not follow a “traditional path.”

I implore that you please oppose any changes to the Tiered licensure system at this time. The law should be given enough time to generate the appropriate data required before ANY suggestions of changes be introduced –and when that time comes, that those changes be carefully determined fairly, and carefully arbitrated by educators who will be most impacted by the changes. My vote will depend on this, as my livelihood does.

Sincerely,

Shai J. Hayo

Tier 2 Teacher

Notes from email 2/27/21

Hello Ms. Taken-Holtze,

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my testimony regarding HF 1376 (previously sent).

I was just made aware of *one more proposed change* to the law that will directly affect me and wanted to quickly express my concern.

I obtained my Tier 2 license in 2018, and at the time of obtaining the license planned to follow the pathway to Tier 3 as the law required.

In 2019 I learned that efforts had been made to potentially eliminate the pathway to Tier 3 as the law had initially stated, and that my ability to even continue to hold a Tier 2

license might depend on "enrollment and progress in a State of MN approved licensure program".

With the understanding that "this might end up being the case", I enrolled in a teacher preparation program and started taking missing coursework at Hamline University that I would need in order to obtain a traditional license (just in case).

As the law stands now, I would have 8 years to complete this requirement, as I could stay at a Tier 2 license for that long; also, Hamline permits me 7 years to complete the program.

I learned that there is an effort being made not only to shorten total number of years that one may stay at Tier 2 (to 6 total, rather than 8), but that my next renewal would then be dependent upon me already having completed "student teaching".

This is completely unrealistic. How can the state abruptly change the law that suddenly requires me to "go back to school" (which in my case, is **unnecessary** - but that is another story) and then offer an unrealistic set of logistical circumstances for me to be able to work myself through the program while being employed as a teacher under Tier 2? Why would the State shorten the total number of years allowed to do this? Why would they require that eligibility renewal of Tier 2 be dependent on the completion **final portions** of a teacher preparation program??? Do the folks who are proposing these changes consider what it is like to be a full-time educator, take course work, and possibly "have a life" at the same time? **These proposed ideas set us up for failure.**

I would ask, do these changes make sense to you? The law has only been in effect since 2018, and half of that time frame was disrupted by the pandemic. How would the state even have enough data to make determination that the law as it stands has proven detrimental or ineffective?

If you have any suggestions for me, I would really appreciate them so much!

I am not sure what to do here, and all of these proposed changes seem very rushed and poorly thought out (and I hate to say it, but even kind of "mean").

Thanks for your time, and I wish you all the best!

Shai Hayo