

PRODEO

A C A D E M Y

February 22, 2021

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this letter to voice my concerns about eliminating the pathway for teachers with the removal from Tier 2 to Tier 3 licensure.

I am in my 12th year of teaching and am considered a tier 4 license holder according to the requirements of MDE licensure. I came to Minnesota from Wisconsin after completing my undergraduate and teacher preparation. During this time, I had the opportunity to build my repertoire under many great teachers. I am currently employed by Prodeo Academy, a charter school in Columbia Heights, MN.

While this is my second year at Prodeo, I have had the wonderful opportunity to be partnered with a teacher that would be affected by this bill. She is my teammate, and she is a strong teacher. Removing this pathway for her to get her tier 4 license would negatively impact not only our team dynamic, but at the heart, her students. She takes her work seriously and have not met a finer young woman who puts in the work to be an exceptional teacher. I know she is not the exception to this rule, but the norm.

She reminds me of a younger version of myself. As I stated, I came to Minnesota from Wisconsin and had to work my way to get proper licensure for Minnesota. With the removal of this pathway, I fear we are steering great educators away from our state. I believe that with the proper oversight Prodeo and many other schools offer, tier 2 and tier 3 licensed candidates will flourish. If this pathway is removed, this will prevent qualified candidates to not only not pursue education, but look for other opportunities in different fields. As you know, we already have a significant shortage of teachers and eliminating this pathway will increase our growing shortage.

To close out, I urge you to keep the tier 2 and tier 3 licenses available to those who want to enter in this noble, yet underappreciated profession. We need people who want to teach and have the enthusiasm to meet our kids where they are.

Signed,

Natalie C. Jones