



Voice For Greater Minnesota Education

TO: Rep. Kunesh-Pudein
Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Chair, House Education Policy Committee
FROM: Fred Nolan, MREA Executive Director
DATE: March 1, 2019
RE: HF 1329

Minnesota Rural Education Association would prefer no action this legislative session on the Tiered licensing system, as the rules were approved just this school year and school administrators have just begun to understand the new system. Let the new system work, see what issues emerge across the state, and then fix those. To act now with these numerous changes is premature and will add more uncertainty for school officials making hiring decisions and for individuals considering teaching as a career.

Here is the bill language in four sections of HF 1329 to which MREA most strenuously objects:

HF 1329 Bill Language

1. 2.6 A Tier 1 license must not be renewed more than three times one time, unless the requesting district or charter school can show good cause for additional renewals. A Tier 1 license issued to teach (1) a class or course in a career and technical education or career pathway course of study or (2) in a shortage area, as defined in section 122A.06, subdivision 6, may be renewed without limitation.

MREA Rationale

A major rationale for MREA's support of a Tier license system are the teacher shortages most acute across Greater MN and among teachers of color. The current supply and demand report shows six Greater MN Economic Development Regions have the greatest teacher shortages.

School administrators have to search for Tier 1 teacher candidates when they do not have Tier 2-4 licensed applicants. Tier 1 is a way to attract mid-career people with a bachelor's degree who want to return to rural roots closer to family and who want a professional career in rural Minnesota. It takes time for someone who never considered a teaching career to teach and then decide to make a career of teaching and invest in a teacher preparation program. This is also a way to attract people of color to teaching.

There was a formal taskforce on CTE in 2013-14. Its number one recommendation on system flexibility was "Maintain high standards for education professionals and allow for flexibility in Minnesota teacher licensure structure that promote opportunities to explore new roles in supporting student's career development." This is what the Tiered system does for CTE experienced individuals who did not choose teaching as their first career, but who have valuable technical and job-related knowledge and skills they are willing to share with ur students.

HF 1329 Bill Language

2. 2.29 (iii) has a master's degree in the specified content area

MREA Rationale

Concurrent enrollment is a major way rural students earn college credit while in high school. The Higher Learning Commission decreed that by Sept. 1, 2022, concurrent enrollment teachers in high school, to be credentialed, must have a master's degree in the content or 16 credits in content beyond a non-content master's degree. For districts without a credentialed teacher, hiring someone with a master's degree in content will meet the HLC credentialing requirement and continue the district's ability to offer college credit concurrent enrollment.



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## HF 1329 Bill Language

3. ~~4.1 (5) three years of teaching experience under a Tier 2 license and evidence of summative teacher evaluations that did not result in placing or otherwise keeping the teacher on an improvement process pursuant to section [122A.40, subdivision 8](#), or section [122A.41, subdivision](#)~~

~~and 4.23 (4) the candidate's most recent summative teacher evaluation did not result in placing or otherwise keeping the teacher in an improvement process pursuant to section [122A.40, subdivision 8](#), or [122A.41, subdivision 5](#).~~

## MREA Rationale

The combination of both of these deletions seriously undermines the value of the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development statutes. What messages are you sending to principals who diligently evaluate teachers and to teachers who work hard to achieve professional development goals and meet state teaching standards -- that it doesn't matter for licensure? For teachers and principals, teacher evaluation and professional growth is hard work. Send a message of encouragement to all professionals doing this work and not a message that it has little or no value in regard to licensure.

## HF 1329 Bill Language

4. ~~7.25 (1) for students in kindergarten through grade 4, a school administrator must not place or approve the placement of a student in the classroom of a teacher who [holds a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license](#), is in the improvement process referenced in paragraph (b), clause (12), or has not had a summative evaluation if, in the prior year, that student was in the classroom of a teacher who received discipline pursuant to paragraph (b), clause (13), unless no other teacher at the school teaches that grade;~~  
and

~~7.31-(2) for students in grades 5 through 12, a school administrator must not place or approve the placement of a student in the classroom of a teacher who [holds a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license](#), is in the improvement process referenced in paragraph (b), clause (12), or has not had a summative evaluation if, in the prior year, that student was in the classroom of a teacher who [held a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license](#), received discipline pursuant to paragraph (b), clause (13), unless no other teacher at the school teaches that subject area and grade. All data created and used under this paragraph retains its classification under chapter [13](#).~~

## MREA Rationale

This equates teachers in Tiers 1 and 2, which are statutorily defined categories of persons licensed to teach, with teachers who have received discipline. I can't imagine a more demeaning section of a bill when we are asking people to enter teaching as career when it wasn't their first choice. I understand the research on the awful impacts on student learning when students have two poor teachers in a row, but this is not the way to address that issue.

## Conclusion

For these reasons, I urge you and the House Education Policy Committee to leave the Tier license system as is for 2019 and, if necessary, proceed cautiously to make the most judicious of changes.

I look forward to a continued conversation on this important issue.



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