

# ***TIERED LICENSURE***

## ***MISDIRECTION ON THE TEACHER SHORTAGE***

Students learn more from teachers who have been trained how to teach. Accepting this fact is what separates Education Minnesota from the current anti-union majorities in the state House and Senate.

In 2017, those majorities used the very real teacher shortage as a pretext to ram through an overhaul of the teacher licensure system that corporate-backed groups had wanted for years.

In that one bill, the majorities lowered Minnesota's standards for earning a teaching license from some of the most rigorous in the nation to some of the lowest. The claim that lowering standards, including for anti-bias training, was the only way to bring more teachers of color into the profession was called insulting by some of the state's top educators of color in a 2018 report.

It is now possible to earn a full professional license without any education in the content field of your license and with no pedagogy beyond a single methods course. Someone can now teach special education without even taking a course in autism, or teach physics without passing a college-level physics class.

In 2018-19, our union will work in our schools to help all educators receive what they need to grow into the best educators they can be. At the Legislature, we will lobby to close the worst loopholes in the law while preserving pathways to licensure for ESPs.

## ***THREE THINGS TO KNOW***

- Minnesota had some of the highest standards in the nation for becoming a licensed teacher, until the 2017 Legislature changed those standards to some of the lowest in the nation.
- The Minnesota bill is similar to model legislation from the American Legislative Exchange Council, which backs charter and online schools that often pay too little to attract fully trained teachers.
- The Legislature also severed the requirement that alternative teacher preparation programs partner with accredited colleges or universities. The door is now open to sketchy for-profit groups.

## ***TAKE CHARGE***

- Members of the Minnesota House and Senate lowered standards in 2017. They can raise them again in 2019. The governor can push to repair the licensure system.
- School board members can budget the resources necessary to provide on-the-job training for Tier 1 teachers who lack formal training, or they can put saving money above teaching quality.
- Support policies that help retain existing teachers of color and recruit more people of color into the profession. For example, so-called "grown your own" programs assist and support current ESPs who want to become fully licensed teachers.



<sup>1</sup> Educator Policy Innovation Center, "The Merits of Teaching Preparation Grounded in Equity: Critical Components for Developing and Retaining Educators who are Responsive to Minnesota's Diverse and Complex Communities." February 2018. <https://educationminnesota.org/advocacy/Educator-Policy-Innovation-Center/EPIC-reports>

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