

# Teacher licensure

## Supporting teachers and keeping them in the classroom

Minnesota's teacher shortage is real – and it will only get worse if the Legislature fails to respond with policies that attract and retain more educators, particularly teachers of color.

In 2017, anti-union majorities in the Legislature used this 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.

Now, teachers no longer need training in how to teach to get their license. What's worse, there are loopholes that let districts and charter schools get out of offering teachers the ongoing training and resources they need to grow into the best educators they can be.

In 2020-21, our union will lobby at the Legislature to improve the new tiered-licensure system so it can both honor teacher preparation while recognizing different pathways into teaching. And we will work to make sure districts use tiered licensure as a vehicle to elevate teachers, support them through their career and keep them in the classroom.


### Three things to know

- Minnesota's current tiered licensure system is similar to model legislation from the American Legislative Exchange Council, which backs charter and online schools that often pay their teachers less and offer them fewer protections.
- Educators should have the freedom to join a union and get protection against exploitation. That's not the case for Tier 1 teachers, many of whom are educators of color, because Minnesota law prohibits them from joining their local bargaining unit.
- 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 in 2021 can strengthen our tiered licensure system and invest in the training and support teachers need to move up the tiers and feel successful in the classroom.
- Push the Legislature to permit Tier 1 teachers to join the teacher bargaining unit so that they may negotiate together for the time and resources to get the training they want and need at the local level.
- Support policies that help retain existing teachers of color and recruit more people of color into the profession. This includes getting rid of the racially biased Minnesota Teacher Licensing Examinations, or MTLE, an unnecessary barrier for some aspiring educators, and expanding so-called "grow-your-own" programs to support current ESPs who want to become licensed teachers.

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*Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.  1669*



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