



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Kurt Daudt
Speaker of the House
Room 463, State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I have vetoed and returned to you Chapter 73, House File 140, the Educator Licensing bill.

The problems identified by the Office of the Legislative Auditor about the confusion and inconsistency in Minnesota's teacher licensing laws highlighted the need for significant reform. I appreciate many of the compromises the Conferees negotiated with Commissioner Cassellius to improve House File 140 from its original iteration. However, I strongly believe any proposal with a fiscal impact must also include the requisite funding. The new Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) created in the bill and the tiered licensure reforms come with estimated costs of \$3.4 million, in addition to roughly \$1.6 million in expenses moved from the Minnesota Department of Education in order to implement them. Although the E-12 Finance Chairs have committed to providing funding in the E-12 omnibus bill, it is not yet guaranteed.

I am also disappointed the Conferees refused to include several of the items, for which Commissioner Cassellius and other stakeholders advocated, both in public testimony and in negotiations, to ensure highly qualified professional teachers for Minnesota students. First and foremost, it is troubling that several routes exist into the third tier to obtain unlimited professional licensure without requiring or proving adequate training. Without a requirement that teaching candidates demonstrate comprehensive training in subject matter content and pedagogy, we risk providing our students with educators who are inadequately prepared. We must always balance the very real urgency of addressing our significant teacher shortages with a commitment to maintaining the high professional standards for which Minnesota is known. As policymakers, it is our obligation and responsibility to ensure that long-term professionally credentialed teachers have received the highest quality preparation.

Additionally, it is disappointing that with an increasingly diverse student body, cultural competency training is not required upon renewal for Tier 1 and Tier 2 licenses. Regardless of the vital need to fill shortages, all teachers should be expected to teach students of all backgrounds in a compassionate, culturally responsive and understanding manner.

Other matters of concern within the Tier 1 area include language allowing renewals that essentially provides no limitation, and the prohibition on Tier 1 licensees from joining the collective bargaining unit. I see no reason why a particular license should prohibit a teacher from the pay and benefits accorded their colleagues.

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We all share the goal of ensuring that every child in every classroom is taught by a high quality professional teacher, and that our efforts to attract and retain those professionals are aided by a clear and easy-to-navigate licensing system. I encourage your Conferees to continue to work with Commissioner Cassellius to address the concerns I have outlined, so I can sign a bill that meets our shared goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dayton". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Michelle L. Fischbach, President of the Senate
Senator Paul E. Gazelka, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Thomas M. Bakk, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Eric Pratt, Minnesota Senate
Representative Melissa Hortman, House Minority Leader
Representative Sondra Erickson, House of Representatives
The Honorable Steve Simon, Secretary of State
Mr. Cal R. Ludeman, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Patrick Murphy, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives
Mr. Paul Marinac, Revisor of Statutes