

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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Chair Kunesh and members of the Senate Education Finance Committee,

We are writing to express our strong support for SF 3370. Below is some contextual information about student teaching in Minnesota and reasons for supporting this bill.

Current Student Teaching Requirement:

- Candidates must complete a minimum of 12 weeks of full-time student teaching.
- For most teacher candidates student teaching is an unpaid experience.
- A common misconception is that student teachers are “paying tuition while working for free as a student teacher.”
 - In fact, the credits tied to student teaching are how a program is able to provide the required student teaching supervision, assessment, and mentoring of the student teacher. Additionally, program staff are responsible for setting up agreements with school districts, securing student teaching placements, compensating cooperating teachers, and maintaining communication with schools.
 - There is often a course anchored to student teaching where required standards are met for licensure and credits are earned for the degree.

History of Unpaid Student Teaching:

- Our current student teaching expectations began when student teachers were predominantly full-time undergraduates, often supported financially by their parents.
- Unpaid internships were common in undergraduate studies across content areas.
 - We now recognize that such unpaid expectations disadvantage students from mid to lower financial brackets.
 - Due to this recognition, unpaid internships are now less common overall.
 - The Department of Labor and Industry classifies student teaching as work that is eligible for registered apprenticeships.

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Current Student Teacher Demographics:

- Student teachers are both undergraduate and graduate students.
 - 33% of teacher candidates in Minnesota are at the post-baccalaureate level.
 - Many undergraduates are nontraditional adult students.
 - Adult student teachers often come into the profession as career changers or as non-licensed school professionals with or without bachelor's degrees.

Financial Stability for Students:

- Both undergraduate and graduate student teachers frequently report experiencing extreme financial distress during the student teaching.
- Teacher candidates may not be able to complete their programs because three months without an income is not a viable option for them or their families.
- When student teachers have to work evenings and weekends to support themselves or their families during this time, they are unable to participate fully, learn less, and often experience burnout.

Improved Teacher Preparation:

- Financial support enables student teachers to dedicate more time and energy to the required tasks (e.g., needs of students, lesson planning, assessments) and become more skilled teachers.
- A student teacher is a second trained adult in the classroom.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we urge you to support SF 3370 and thank Senator Gustafson for her work on the legislation.

Sincerely,

Laura Mogelson, Legislative Liaison
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