2017 Legislative Session Issue Brief
Licensure and Board of Teaching

Minnesota’s students need leaders who are ready to confront the growing shortage of qualified teachers and who won’t settle for quick and empty fixes.

Minnesotans value standards for our doctors, nurses and accountants. The same should be true for our teachers. Maintaining Minnesota’s high teacher licensing standards is a critical piece to ensuring our children have access to a high-quality public education with well-trained teachers.

The state’s licensing process is complex. But it isn’t the reason for our teacher shortage or lack of diversity in the profession. We have more than 140,000 licensed teachers in this state and only 58,000 of them are working in our schools. Even states with lax licensing standards have teacher shortages. Licensing isn’t the problem.

Proposals at the Legislature

A Minnesota teaching license has always been a seal of quality from the state, but that may change under proposed overhauls in the Legislature.

The House proposal, HF140, would give individual administrators more say over licenses and give a new kind of license to people working in schools who currently don’t meet licensing standards. That includes allowing teachers in the lowest tiers to teach for eight years without having a bachelor’s degree or any teacher preparation training.

SF4 in the Senate would require those in the lowest tier to have a bachelor’s degree, but not teacher preparation training. This license could be renewed forever – essentially allowing someone to teach for her whole career without any training on how to teach.

Both the House and Senate bills maintain an independent state Board of Teaching.

Maintaining high licensing standards

Minnesota can keep the state’s high teacher licensing standards while making the process less confusing and cumbersome for educators. To do that, Education Minnesota supports:

• Maintaining an independent state Board of Teaching, with active teachers making up the majority of members.

Continued on back
• Reinventing the licensure process so it becomes more efficient and transparent through a system of tiered licensure, while upholding Minnesota’s high licensing standards. Any tiered system must include a bachelor’s degree and teacher training requirements for any teacher to move up through process.

It’s time to focus on what’s really causing our state’s teacher shortage and lack of diversity in the profession. Teachers want respect and support in their classrooms and profession. And they need relief from standardized testing and redundant paperwork that takes away from student learning time.

For more information, contact:
• Megan Boldt — 651-292-4818, megan.boldt@edmn.org
• Jodee Buhr — 651-292-4830, jodee.buhr@edmn.org
• Kathi Micheletti — 651-292-4890, kathi.micheletti@edmn.org
• Paul Winkelaar — 651-292-4837, paul.winkelaar@edmn.org