

Education Minnesota

Educators union supports bills to boost the profession

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ST. PAUL, Minnesota, March 4, 2020 – Three bills heard Wednesday in the Minnesota House Education Policy Committee would raise the level of training and professionalism of educators throughout the state, said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht, who said the union endorsed the bills.

“Every student in Minnesota deserves to learn from a well-trained, professional educator,” Specht said. “These bills value the art and science of teaching, the power to negotiate a fair return for work, the role of education support professionals and the importance of educators for the youngest and oldest learners in our E-12 schools.”

- HF1116 would bring teachers of Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) under the continuing contract law and Teacher Tenure Act. Although these teachers are required to be fully licensed and have similar training and responsibilities, they do not have the same protections as other K-12 teachers. This bill would fix this inequity and treat these teachers with the respect they deserve.
- HF3800 makes small changes to the teacher licensure law, including removing the prohibition on Tier 1 teachers from joining the same union as teachers with more traditional academic training. The change would guarantee that Tier 1 teachers who joined the union are compensated on the same schedule as other teachers in the building.
- HF3881 affects education support professionals, or ESPs. It would provide funding for 16 hours of professional training each school year for our ESPs. ESPs often receive little to no professional development prior to working one-on-one with students. This training is essential for students and ESPs.

Derrin Turnage, a Tier 1 teacher of culinary arts at the Harrison Education Center in Minneapolis, submitted a letter to the committee in favor of HF3800, which would permit teachers with Tier 1 licenses to join the same bargaining unit as other teachers.

“I want to join a union because I believe that my voice, added with others, can raise wages and benefits for teachers and advocate for our students,” Turnage wrote. “I want to join a union because as a Tier 1 teacher I want to access the training the union can provide around pedagogy and trauma and child development.”

About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota’s members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota’s public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota’s community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota

campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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