

Minnesota's students deserve prepared educators who are responsive to diverse and complex communities.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATION MINNESOTA'S EPIC PAPER ON: THE MERITS OF TEACHING PREPARATION GROUNDED IN EQUITY

In 2017, Minnesota's state lawmakers drastically reduced the requirements to teach in Minnesota classrooms. This has dramatic implications for Minnesota's students, especially students of color.

Minnesota is at a critical juncture for our students. We must decide if our children –all of our children –deserve the best, most highly prepared educators or if they deserve less. Our children deserve more than cheap-and-easy proposals that do not address the roots of the inequities and injustices in our education system. They deserve highly trained, skilled, and professional educators that will inspire them to be the creators of our new century.

Minnesota should build new pathways that challenge structural racism and benefit all students.

Lawmakers made this decision even though decades of academic research has concluded that quality teacher preparation, not on the job training, yields better outcomes for students. Scholars have confirmed that:

1. **Properly trained classroom teachers produce higher achieving students as measured by academic assessments.**
2. **Teachers lacking preparation lead to negative outcomes for students.**

Teacher preparation, not on the job training, is critically important to student achievement and success. For the sake of our students, all future teachers in Minnesota must receive quality preparation in these seven components:

1. **All teaching candidates need training in content knowledge and content-specific methodology.**
2. **All teaching candidates need training in childhood development, including social emotional learning and trauma-informed practices.**
3. **All teaching candidates need training in classroom management, student behavior, and restorative practices.**
4. **All teaching candidates need training in robust and multi-faceted training in assessment.**
5. **All teaching candidates need training on teaching diverse learners.**
6. **All teaching candidates need training in special education.**
7. **All teaching candidates need clinical experience tied to theory and built on collaboration.**

WHY DISCUSS THIS NOW?

Troubling trends are going to aggravate the way future teachers are trained. We ask lawmakers to consider the following facts as state officials evaluate and approve teacher preparation programs.

Fact #1: Eliminating teacher preparation and certification requirements exacerbate, rather than eradicate, inequities. Minnesota already has one of the largest achievement gaps between students of color and white students. All teacher preparation pathways must embrace a critical race, equity lens and prepare future teachers for the demands of the profession.

Fact #2: Lowering professional licensure standards increases attrition rates for new teachers. Many districts in Minnesota are struggling to hire teachers in critical shortage areas. More than 50,000 licensed teachers in the state are not working in classrooms. This majority of trained teachers have left the profession because of efforts to devalue the profession and the public school system. They did not leave because of challenging standards or licensing loopholes.

Fact #3: Quick, alternative pathways and “on-the-job” preparation paths harm students. These programs increase attrition, decrease student achievement, and contribute to the systemic inequities that have led to Minnesota’s achievement gap.

HOW CAN LAWMAKERS AND STAKEHOLDERS ACT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY?

1. Close the loophole in Minnesota’s tiered licensure system that allows a candidate to attain a Tier 3 license without having completed teacher preparation.
2. Provide financial support and other resources to Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers to move through teacher preparation programs.
3. Invest resources in higher quality and collaborative relationships between teacher preparation programs and school districts
4. Fully fund public institutions of higher education in the form of subsidizing free/affordable college education, tuition tax relief, and education debt relief.
5. Increase teacher salaries to incentivize long-term commitments to our most diverse and our most impoverished schools.
6. Build grow-your-own programs that provide education support professionals quality pathways to become licensed teachers.
7. Support research about how Minnesota teacher preparation programs can achieve better results for a diverse demographic of teacher candidates.
8. Expand the Minnesota Teacher Loan Repayment Program by providing adequate funding and broadening eligibility requirements to include school-based counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and other support personnel.