Overview of the Senate Education Policy Bill (HF1495 DE1)

3/20/2015 (as amended)

Licensure

- A teacher candidate who attains qualifying scores on board-approved college-level skills, pedagogy and content test will be recommended for licensure.
- Teacher candidates must demonstrate a passing score on the board adopted skill exam in reading, writing and mathematics, and eliminates use of ACT or SAT score.
- Board may issues up to 4 (instead of 2) temporary, one-year teaching licenses to otherwise qualified candidate who has not yet passed board adopted skills exam.
- Two-year provisional license may be granted to a candidate in the field which they were not previously licensed or in a shortage licensure area.
- Teacher candidate is allowed to receive testing accommodations.
- Teacher candidate may submit a portfolio to demonstrate the prerequisite competence.
- Teaching license will be denied or revoked if teacher is convicted of a sex related crimes.
- The Board of Teaching may consider issuing a license to out of state trained teacher if teaching license from another state in similar content field, completion of state approved teacher preparation program, teaching experience, and depth of content knowledge and method.
- The Board of Teaching must develop and publish criteria and procedures to attain Minnesota license for out of state teachers that recognizes experience and professional credentials.
- The Board of Teaching must enter into interstate agreements with other states so that licensed teachers may transfer their certification to receive Minnesota teaching license.
- Nonprofits may partner with college or university to provide an alternative teacher prep program.
- Student teacher must be placed with a licensed teacher who has at least 3 years of experience and is not in the improvement process.
- Part-time vocational or career and technical education program teachers are exempt from licensure requirements with approval of local employer school board. Exemption expires on June 30, 2020. (3/19 amend)
- The Department of Education must convene a work group to review the current status of career and technical educator licenses and provide recommendations on changes needed to increase access to instructors. (3/20 amend)

Licensure Renewal/Continuing Education

- Retired school principals who are short-call substitutes principal or assistant principals are subject to continuing education requirements.

Teacher Development

- School administrators are prohibited from placing students in consecutive school years with a teacher with the lowest evaluation rating in previous school year unless no other teacher in the school teaches that grade or subject area.

Assessments

- Mathematics MCA is eliminated in grades 3 and 4, contingent of attaining federal flexibility waiver.
- Reading MCA is eliminated in grade 6 and 7, contingent of attaining federal flexibility waiver.
- Explore, Plan and Compass exams are eliminated.
- Districts must use career exploration no later than grade 9.
- Department of Education must develop a list of circumstances in which a student may not take a test.
Standards

- The commissioner’s review and revision of state’s math standards are postponed to 2020-21.
- Agriculture science or career and technical education credit may fulfill elective science, chemistry or physics credit.
- Computer science credit to fulfill a mathematics graduation requirement.
- Project Lead the Way credit may fulfill a science or mathematics credit.
- School districts must use the world language standard as developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages for language electives.
- Foreign language proficiency certificates and seals modified by removing the high achievement certificates, changes to the language proficiency that must be demonstrated to receive state bilingual or multilingual seal. MnSCU institutions must recognize seals and award academic credit.
- Local literacy plan requirement is expanded to include effectiveness of assessments used, parent involvement, intervention strategies, staff development, and instruction in basic phonology and language decoding. Basic skills revenue may be used for plan implementation.
- School districts are required to develop a process for determining a grade promotion or retention.

Concurrent Enrollment/PSEO

- Students in grade 9 and 10 are may enroll in concurrent enrollment world language course that is available to 11 and 12 grade students.
- Students in grade 10 who did not take MCA in grade 8 may use a different assessment in order to take career and technical education PSEO course.
- Middle or early college program is clarified that it must provide clearly defined pathway to a degree or credential for student enrolled in the graduation incentive program.

Early Childhood Education

- Children receiving Race to the Top – Early Learning scholarships are eligible to receive a state scholarship at the end of the federal grant, until they are in kindergarten.
- Children in foster care or experiencing homelessness or has a parent under 21 who continuing education prioritized for early learning scholarships.
- Programs participating in early learning scholarships are required to maintain attendance records and funds used in a program the child attends consistently.
- Home visiting programs focus on reaching children with high needs and program must include brain development information.

Special Education

- Dyslexia is defined as a specific learning disability with characteristic difficulties and identified consequences.
- School boards to provide transportation to child with disability to is not yet enrolled in kindergarten to receive special instruction and services, including placing in early childhood program.
- Changes to local agency coordination of responsibilities between school boards and county.
- School boards to make sure that when paraprofessionals are hired to provide direct support to students with disabilities they have sufficient knowledge and skills and receive annual training to understand each student’s unique and individual needs.
- Third party reimbursement to meet the requirements of having a system of payment policy under state’s Part C policy.
- School districts special education case management information systems must be compatible with the state system with ability to transfer records between school districts.
- Special education is directly paid to cooperatives, education districts and intermediate districts.
Student Discipline
• School district must adopt a discipline policy for elementary students that details alternative to suspension. Suspending is allowed under certain circumstances.
• School districts must develop programing to reduce suspensions and must annual report to school board.

School Calendar
• The board of any district may authorize flexible learning year (four-week school calendar) without the approval of the commissioner.
• School districts may start school year on September 1 for 2015-16 school year only.

World’s Best Workforce
• 3rd grade reading report, alternative teacher professional pay system, and staff development reports to be reported within the World’s Best Workforce reporting.

American Indian Education Act
• American Indian Education Act updates and makes technical changes.

Charter Schools
• Charter school law recodification and modifications in relation to authorizers and contract renewals, formation of school, admission requirements, pupils with disabilities, annual public reporting, and merger and aid payments.
• Charter schools may enroll and serve nearly 100% of students on free or reduced lunch program. (3/19 amend)

Repeals
• Provision in improving graduation rates for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.
• Reporting requirement for the Telecom Equity Aid.