



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

February 28, 2011

Senator Gen Olson
235 State Capitol Building
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Pat Garofalo
537 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Olson and Representative Garofalo:

Thank you very much for your willingness to work cooperatively and constructively with Education Commissioner Cassellius, my Staff, and me on SF40, your Alternative Pathway to Teacher Licensing legislation. I am very pleased that our discussions have led to an agreement.

I thank you for the amendments to the House bill, the changes outlined in your February 25th letter, and your verbal agreement last Friday to reinsert required student teaching. With those improvements, I will sign that legislation, if it is passed by the Legislature.

The definition of compromise is a final solution, in which neither party gets everything it wants. While Commissioner Cassellius and I do not agree with every provision in the legislation, after much give and take on both sides, we accept those differences in order to accomplish our shared objective: to pass reforms that will close the achievement gap and raise the educational standard for all Minnesota school children.

I am most disappointed that the bill does not contain a more direct link to higher education, as the oversight for new programs offering alternative teacher preparation programs. The Board of Teaching will need to be very careful about the programs it approves, as there are not as many safeguards in place to monitor an alternative

Senator Gen Olson
Representative Pat Garofalo
February 28, 2011
Page 2

program's effectiveness in the early years as Commissioner Cassellius had sought. However, I do appreciate that a consulting link to higher education is still required, and see the possible program revocation as providing some protection.

On a positive note, I believe this compromise addresses three important aspects that should increase student achievement. The legislation does create a "true" alternative pathway program to help us address projected teacher shortages; it assures well-prepared teacher candidates with content expertise; and it should increase teacher diversity. Furthermore, SF40 empowers the Board of Teaching to establish rigorous criteria for program approval and evaluation, and the power to revoke program approval if necessary. It will be the Board of Teaching's responsibility to provide the rigorous approval and review procedures that will be crucial to ensure quality standards for all teachers, who are placed in classrooms.

It is vitally important that we continue to work together, so that we continue to move forward with the important work ahead of us. The school children of our state and their parents are counting on us to make further progress toward delivering a world-class education to every Minnesota child. Coming together to find common ground is how we will solve this and the many serious challenges facing our state. Again, I thank you both for your willingness to do so.

My best regards.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton
Governor

(signed MKH/approved MBD)

MD:kdk

cc: Senator Amy Koch, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Tom Bakk, Senate Minority Leader
Senator LeRoy Stumpf
Representative Kurt Zellers, Speaker of the House
Representative Paul Thissen, House Minority Leader
Representative Mindy Greiling