STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

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

May 25, 2011

The Honorable Michelle L. Fischbach
President of the Senate
226 State Capitol
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Madam President:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 45, Senate File 170, a bill requiring teacher candidates to pass a basic skills exam. I do so with the hope that a majority of the provisions in this bill will come back in future legislation.

Increasing the rigor of standards for Minnesota teacher candidates is a goal I share with the Legislature. Changing education policy so that teacher candidates will eventually be required to pass the Basic Skills Test before they enter a teacher preparation program, is a logical way to increase both the rigor and quality in teacher preparation programming.

This bill has received strong bipartisan support in both bodies, but it contains two problematic provisions that need to be addressed. First, this bill strikes the requirement that higher education teacher preparation programs provide remediation to candidates who do not pass the basic skills exam. Teacher candidates who show promise as future teachers but who may have test-taking challenges should receive the educational support they need. Second, the bill allows teacher candidates who have completed their preparation program in another state to receive a one-year license to teach before passing the basic skills exam. This contradicts efforts in the rest of the bill to raise requirements for teacher candidates, and places fewer requirements on out-of-state teacher candidates than on Minnesota candidates. We have no way to gauge the effectiveness of out-of-state programs and their standards, but it stands to reason that if someone licensed to teach in another state is ready to teach in Minnesota, they should be capable of, and expected to, pass the basic skills test.

Increasing the level of rigor expected for future Minnesota teachers is a goal I support. If you were to include language in an education bill during special session that

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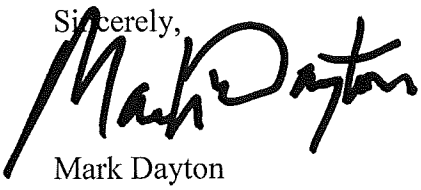
would eventually require individuals to pass the Basic Skills Test before they enter a teacher preparation program, I would support it. I look forward to signing future legislation that works toward this outcome.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Amy T. Koch, Majority Leader
Senator Thomas M. Bakk, Minority Leader
Senator Theodore Daley
Representative Kurt Zellers, Speaker of the House
Representative Paul Thissen, Minority Leader
Representative Andrea Kieffer
The Honorable Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State
Mr. Cal R. Ludeman, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Albin A. Mathiowetz, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives