

Licensure and Teacher Retention

MASE supports efforts to increase the number and retention of licensed special educators.

- MASE believes due process requirements that exceed federal mandates add stress to special education teachers and place Minnesota districts at the breaking point in terms of recruiting and retaining quality special education staff.
- MASE believes in the expansion of special education training programs and alternative educational paths to special education licensure to address the current and future demands of districts for qualified, licensed special education teachers.
- MASE believes that the continuation of community expert status, limited licenses, and variances for those who meet the qualifications to fill the numerous vacancies in special education when a qualified license applicant is not available is important for providing service to students with disabilities due to the shortage of licensed special education teachers.
- MASE believes retention of existing teachers is critical and supports the findings in the Workload Considerations for Effective Special Education to provide a supportive environment and increase the retention of special education staff.
- MASE believes it is not necessary to go forward with paraprofessional credentialing because it does not add value to the system and will increase the difficulty districts currently have in filling paraprofessional positions.
 - MASE believes credentialing initiatives currently proposed will add significant costs for districts.
 - MASE believes No Child Left Behind and IDEA already set high standards for paraprofessionals.
 - MASE believes a strong focus on training at the local district level is the key to successful paraprofessional support for students with disabilities.

MASE supports expansion of special education training programs and the development of alternative educational pathways to special education licensure.

- MASE believes in providing more flexibility to focus on student needs rather than disability labels by creating a multi-disability special education license.

- MASE believes that the creation of a multi-disability license covering teachers serving students with disabilities will provide the flexibility to focus on student needs rather than disability labels.
- MASE believes that there should not be any additional disability specific licenses and focus be placed on appropriate training and professional development.