

Carla Nelson

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SENATE
State of Minnesota

September 1, 2015

Governor Mark Dayton
116 Veterans Service Building
20 W 12th Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Governor Dayton:

Minnesota has a long and successful history of giving high school students a head start on their college education through concurrent enrollment. Yet recently adopted rules by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will limit the ability of school districts to offer these highly effective and cost saving college courses in our high schools.

On June 26, 2015, the HLC adopted new faculty qualifications for concurrent enrollment teachers. The new qualifications require teachers to hold a master's degree in the field of study, or a master's degree in another field plus 18 graduate credits in the field of study. While well intended, the new rule will hamper the ability of school districts, especially smaller school districts, to continue to offer concurrent courses.

While the HLC is an unelected, unappointed, non-profit organization, it has significant power over our schools because it is the accreditation body for many of our colleges. Reviews of Minnesota's concurrent enrollment system have demonstrated not only the ability to reduce the cost of a college degree but to also help close the achievement gap.

I am writing to ask you to oppose the new faculty qualification rule from the HLC. I am hopeful that your strong voice and public opposition will cause the HLC to reconsider this rule change. Minnesota is a leader in this area and we should continue that leadership on behalf of our high school students and their families.

I am also contacting the governors and higher education commissioners of the other member states in the HLC in hope that they will add their voice in opposition to this restriction on concurrent enrollment.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carla Nelson". The script is fluid and cursive.

Carla Nelson