

# Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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## Hill Day March 4, 2010

Dear Hill Day 2010 State Team Leaders:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE), thank you for serving as a State Team Leader (STL) for Hill Day 2010 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Hill Day is an important opportunity for Colleges of Education and stakeholders to advocate for state funding, share their perspective on teacher preparation, and highlight the impact Colleges of Education have on student learning and the education community. Your willingness to share your time, energy and expertise will help secure vital Legislative support for the process of Teacher Education.

More than 30 enthusiastic MACTE members and stakeholders are expected to participate in Hill Day 2010 and your leadership will facilitate an organized, strategic advocacy experience for all. More importantly, Legislative offices will be responsive to our clear, unified message on teacher education and appreciative that we have established an orderly system by which our Hill Day appointments are made, coordinated and executed.

We will provide STLs with information, materials and guidance to help you schedule appointments, draft talking points and meeting materials, and develop strategies to both maintain existing support and build new support among Legislative offices. MACTE will also provide STLs and Hill Day participants with official Information Packets to give to Legislative staff and Members (packets will be e-mailed in advance of Hill Day – 2010 at the Capitol and distributed at the briefing on March 4<sup>th</sup>).

It is critical that STLs work closely with MACTE in preparing for Hill Day – 2010 so that appropriate, effective messages and strategies are developed that do not jeopardize educational legislative priorities or the reputation of the MACTE. We appreciate your sensitivity to the delicate aspects to Legislative advocacy.

For your convenience, below is a list of key dates for STL activities and the subsequent pages include an outline of the Hill Day – 2010 mission, talking points (including research summaries) and recommendations for scheduling appointments. Again, thank you for your contribution to Hill Day - 2010 and let the FUN BEGIN! Feel free to contact us if you have questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Scott Page, Ph.D.  
Coordinator of Professional Education  
Minnesota State, Mankato,  
Armstrong Hall 118  
Mankato, MN 56001

**Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010      Hill Day – 2010**

8:30 to 9:30 am      Hill Day – 2010 Briefing  
**Location:** State Office Building Cafeteria; 100 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
(Basement level-near the elevators)

9:30 to 12:00 pm      Hill Day – 2010 Meeting at the Capitol with legislators  
12:00 to 1:00 pm      Lunch in the Senate Cafeteria  
1:00 to 3:30 pm      Hill Day – 2010 Meeting at the Capitol with legislators  
3:30 to 4:30 pm      Hill Day – 2010 at the Capitol Debriefing:  
**Location:** State Office Building Cafeteria; 100 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
(Basement level-near the elevators)

**Thursday – Tentative Schedule for our Hill Day – 2010 planning**

8:30 to 11:00 am      Senate: E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division  
Room 112 Capitol  
Chair: Sen. LeRoy Stumpf  
Deputy Chair: Charles W. Wiger  
Vice Chair: Terri E. Bonoff  
Ranking Minority Member: Gen Olson

Other Members: Ellen R. Anderson , Tarryl L. Clark, Kevin L. Dahle, Lisa A. Fobbe, Chris Gerlach, David W. Hann, Amy T. Koch, Geoff Michel, Claire A. Robling, Sandy Rummel, Kathy L. Saltzman, Tom Saxhaug, Dan Skogen, and Patricia Torres Ray

8:30 to 10:00 am      House: K-12 Education Policy and Oversight  
Room Basement State Office Building  
Chair: Rep. Carols Mariani  
Vice Chair: Kory Kath  
Lead-GOP: Carol McFarlane

Other Members: Jim Abeler, John Benson, Kathy Brynaert, Jim Davnie, Randy Demmer, Denise Dittrich, Connie Doepke, Keith Downey, Tim Faust, Mindy Greiling, Jenifer Loon, Mark Murdock, Jerry Newton, Bud Nornes, Kim Norton, Mike Obermueller, Sandra Peterson, Nora Slawik, Marsha Swails

**Thursday – Tentative Schedule for our Hill Day – 2010 planning**

12:30 to 2:45 pm

Senate: Higher Education Budget and Policy Division  
Room 123 Capitol  
Chair: Sen. Sandra Pappas  
Vice Chair: Kathy Sheran  
Ranking Minority Member: Claire A. Robling

Other Members: Tarryl L. Clark, Richard J. Cohen, Sharon L. Erickson Ropes, Paul E. Koering, Ron Latz, Ann Lynch, Geoff Michel, David H. Senjem, David J. Tomassoni, and Charles W. Wiger

2:45 to 4:00

House: K-12 Education Finance Division  
Room 10 State Office Building  
Chair: Rep. Mindy Greiling  
Vice Chair: John Ward  
Lead-GOP: Pat Garofalo

Other Members: Paul Anderson, Tom Anzelc, John Benson, Robin Brown, Mark Buesgens, Jim Davnie, Randy Demmer, Bob Dettmer, Denise Dittrich, Connie Doepke, Carlos Mariani, Paul Marquart, Carol McFarlane, Will Morgan, Jerry Newton, Linda Slocum, Marsha Swails, Tom Tillberry, ex-officio Lyndon Carlson Sr., ex-officio Loren Solberg

## Helpful Tips

To personalize your meetings, feel free to prepare a one-page handout for Legislative Members and staff that highlight your, and/or other stakeholders' involvement in, for instance:

- Activities related to your school, college, or program;
- Activities related to implementing *No Child Left Behind* in your school, college, or program;
- Action research you have been involved with relating to student performance;
- Mentoring or leadership programs;
- Outreach or advocacy related to state and local educational issues;
- STEM education initiatives;
- Reading Legislations;
- Early childhood outreach;
- Strategies that you have implemented to address the achievement gap;
- Activities involving Professional Development School partnerships.

If you choose to prepare such a handout, please be brief and try not to exceed one page. Include a brief introduction, bullet-point your information, and be sure to provide your name and contact information.

Consider including a recent graduate or a current student from your program as a member of your team. Legislators love to hear from our students.

## Good to Know

- Do your homework – research the Legislative Member's position on education reform and federal funding of education programs. This information is almost always found on the Member's Legislative web site and help shape and focuses your conversation.
- Does the Member have school-age children? Does the Member have a relative who teaches? Use this information to personalize the dialogue on Teacher Education. Again, this information is usually found on the Member's web site.
- **Apply the old adage of "Staying on Message" when communicating with Legislative Members and their staff.** When asking for the Member and staff to support funding request and the work of College of Education, do not to raise issues unrelated to teacher education. Deviating from the message or the impact of teacher education has may dilute or derail the purpose of your meeting. Your message will carry more weight if it is simple and to the point.
- **Avoid Partisan Politics.** Our Legislative supporters include Republicans, Democrats, and Independents and this is a balance that must be maintained at all times. By remaining non-partisan, MACTE has been able to move its legislative agenda forward regardless of

power shifts in the State House and Senate. Whether writing a letter or preparing comments or handouts for your Hill Day meeting, pay close attention to avoiding partisan comments that could alienate or embarrass the Member of staff.

## **Scheduling Hill Day Appointments**

State Team Leaders are responsible for scheduling Hill Day appointments and assigning your team members to meetings with Members and staff. It is extremely important that you contact Legislative offices prior to Hill Day to schedule appointments.

It's never too early to start scheduling your Hill Day appointments.

Legislative contact information is available on the Internet. To reach your Senators, go to the Minnesota Senate home page at <http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/> and to reach your Representatives, go to the Minnesota House of Representatives home page at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/>.

Historically, the House has been -- and remains -- the more informal of the two legislative bodies. While there is no written dress code governing the Legislature, Senate members observe a more formal standard. Male senators all wear ties, with most also adhering to the "white shirt" formal standard. In the House, members are at times without neckwear. Such casual dress is not seen in the Senate chamber.

To ensure a successful Hill Day, below are some helpful tips for planning your Legislative meetings.

### **1. Plan Ahead:**

Determine which Legislative offices you need to meet with.

### **2. Make an Appointment:**

Contact the scheduler in the Member's office *at least* two weeks prior to Hill Day. The scheduler will likely require a meeting request letter faxed to their office (a sample letter is at the end of this section). The Member's scheduler will be able to provide details on faxing a request. Be sure to add the Legislative Assistant (LA) for Education to the request letter (see below). The receptionist in each Legislative office can provide you with the name and correct spelling of both the scheduler and Education LA. Inform the scheduler that you are a Member of MACTE and your state institution and briefly explain the purpose for the meeting.

Hill Day meetings should be scheduled for **March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 between 10:30 AM and 4:00 PM**. If a Legislative Member is unavailable to meet with you, ask to meet with the Member's education staff person, legislative director, or chief of staff. Meeting with Legislative staff is very productive and often provides an opportunity for a more in-depth discussion. If the scheduler sets your appointment time prior to 10:30AM – take the meeting at that time and

don't worry about missing the Hill Day briefing. We will make sure your group is ready to go with all the necessary information ahead of time.

It is important to remember that you can schedule one or two meetings at the same time – STLs will be dividing their teams into groups since not every Hill Day participant can go to every one of state's Legislative offices. Divide and Conquer!

**3. Be Prompt, Patient and Flexible:**

It is important to be on time for your meetings, otherwise you may lose the opportunity to meet with the Member. **When planning your meetings, budget approximately 15 minutes to get from one office to another.** Also, be patient. It is not uncommon for a Member to be late, or to have the meeting interrupted. If your meeting is interrupted or the meeting time is changed at the last moment, be flexible. You may have to continue your meeting with the Member's staff instead.

**4. Be Prepared:**

Bring information and materials you need to support your message. MACTE will provide you with information packets to share with Legislative offices, but also share examples with the Member to demonstrate the impact teacher education has on your local schools, community, state, and on the teaching profession. Legislative Members want to support programs that are in the best interests of their district or state. Therefore, it is critical to show a connection between the Member's constituency and teacher education.

# Sample Meeting Request Memo

If you use this draft of the letter be sure to make the necessary modifications

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To: Anna Reilly, Scheduler &  
JK Robinson, Education Legislative Assistant  
Office of Senator John Warner  
Fax: 202.224.6295

From: Douglas Graney, St. Cloud State University  
State Team Leader for MACTE Hill Day - 2010  
Phone: (703) 555-5555

Re: March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010 Meeting Request with Senator Warner & Staff

My name is Douglas Graney and I am a member of Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE) and the College of Education at St. Cloud State University. On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010, several faculty members from MACTE and I will participate in the Hill Day - 2010.

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On behalf of the St. Cloud State University delegation of MACTE I am requesting a meeting with Senator Warner for approximately 30 minutes sometime between 10:30 AM and 4:00 PM on March 4<sup>th</sup>. This meeting would allow us to share with Senator Warner critical information surrounding the impact and progress of teacher education. In particular:

- Point One;
- Point Two; and
- Highlights of specific Point Three.

St. Cloud, its local school districts and private entities have made an important investment in teacher education. Improving teacher quality and retention as well as raising the bar for student achievement has never been more important. In this high-stakes arena, MACTE is providing real solutions to many of the challenges facing our education system today. We look forward to meeting with Senator Warner and his staff to broaden the conversation on the documented success of teacher education and the teachers who undertake this rigorous process.

Thank you for your assistance and please notify me as soon as possible with information on the Senator's availability. Please be aware that we will limit the size of the MACTE group so as not to overwhelm the Senator's office. As soon as we are able to, we will forward your office a complete list of meeting participants. Thank you for your time and help.