



March 22, 2012

Dear Representative Erickson and Senator Olson,

As president of the Minnesota Science Teachers Association (MnSTA) and as chair of the MnSTA Legislative Policy Committee, we are writing this letter to express concerns regarding HF 0682 and SF 451. Each bill addresses the current statute that all students graduating in 2014-15 school years or later must satisfactorily complete a chemistry, physics or career and technical education credit that meets the chemistry or physics standards.

Last year the statute was amended to include career and technical education with the caveat that a CTE class be based upon either all of the chemistry or physics standards. Now HF 0682 and SF 451 propose to further amend the requirement to a chemistry, physics or career and technical education class that “utilizes standards associated with either the chemistry, physics, or biology credit or a combination thereof,”

The MnSTA board would like to express concerns about this proposed change in the statute. Our concerns include:

1. The proposed change mixes biology standards with physics and chemistry standards. Biology currently has a credit requirement for graduation and an MCA assessment focused on the Life Science standards. It is not clear why biology standards are included in this proposed change.
2. The proposed change does not designate the science standards that should be included in a CTE course that is being substituted for chemistry or physics. The language of the proposed change is vague and open ended and seems to bypass the newly revised science graduation requirements.
3. The proposed bills take a step backwards in Minnesota's effort to maintain high standards in science education. The MnSTA Board of Directors recommends removing both HF 0682 and SF 451 from the legislative docket.

The Minnesota Science Teachers Association is disappointed that neither the Senate nor House Education Committees sought input from the education professionals responsible for improving the science education of Minnesota students. We believe that it is important that Minnesota maintain high standards in science education as we work to meet the challenges of the equipping students with 21st century skills and knowledge. ***We would welcome the opportunity to discuss possible solutions to the constraints felt by some districts regarding the requirements of science standards and legislatively mandated course requirements.***

Sincerely,
Mary Colson
MnSTA President and

Chuck Handlon
Chair MnSTA Legislative Committee

Cc: Governor Dayton,
Brenda Cassellius
Tom Dooher
Mike Lindstrom, SciMath Minnesota