



February 24, 2021

Chair Chamberlain,  
3325 MN Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for SF446 Increase Teachers of Color Act

Dear Chair Chamberlain and members of the Committee,

When students of color have teachers of color, they're more likely to be placed in gifted programs<sup>1</sup> and less likely to experience disciplinary referrals.<sup>2</sup> They also feel more cared for and interested in their homework,<sup>3</sup> and are ultimately more likely to graduate from high school.<sup>4</sup> And yet, Minnesota continues to have one of the whitest teacher workforces in the nation: 96% of the state's teachers are white, and that percentage has barely changed in two decades despite the student population becoming increasingly diverse.<sup>5</sup>

We are pleased to be part of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers and to support efforts to diversify Minnesota's teacher workforce. EdAllies supports the following provisions in the Teachers of Color Act:

- Grow Your Own Program Grants: Research indicates that teachers who are prepared through Grow Your Own Programs are more racially diverse than traditional teacher preparation programs and, after completing the program, are more likely to be retained.<sup>6</sup> We support this provision and allocation because it creates more pathways into the teaching profession—particularly for non-traditional individuals—while addressing some of the financial barriers.
- Reporting on Programs (Lines 6.1-7.15): State-funded teacher preparation programs, such as Grow Your Own and Collaborative Urban and Greater Minnesota Educators of Color, are meant to help diversify the teacher workforce. Requiring a report on the effectiveness of these programs gives us the opportunity to elevate best practices and make changes where needed.
- Expanding Access to Tier 3 Licensure (Lines 9.13-9.23): Teachers from foreign countries face barriers to licensure, because their situation is not specifically addressed within the current tiered system. We endorse the change to allow someone who completed teacher preparation in another country and has at least two years of teaching experience to receive a Tier 3 license. We also endorse the proposal that would give someone a Tier 3 license if they completed a teacher preparation program from a Minority Serving Institutions—Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges, or Hispanic-Serving Institutions.
- Access to Ethnic Studies Curriculum (lines 3.11-3.12): Research has found that students—particularly male and Latino students—who participate in ethnic studies made gains in

<sup>1</sup> Grissom, J., Rodriguez, L., & Kern, E. (2017). "Teacher and Principal Diversity and the Representation of Students of Color in Gifted Programs: Evidence from National Data" *The Elementary School Journal*.

<sup>2</sup> Lindsay, C., & Hart, C. (2017). "Exposure to Same-Race Teachers and Student Disciplinary Outcomes for Black Students in North Carolina." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

<sup>3</sup> Boisrond, C. (September 2017). "If Your Teacher Looks Like You, You May Do Better In School." *NPR*.

<sup>4</sup> Gershenson, S., Hart, C., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. (March 2017). "The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers." *IZA Institute of Labor Economics*.

<sup>5</sup> Mahamud, F., & Webster, M. (2018). "Minnesota schools struggle with widening racial gap between students and teachers." *Star Tribune*.

<sup>6</sup> Gist, C., Biano, M., & Lynn, M. (2018). "Examining Grow Your Own Programs Across the Teacher Development Continuum: Mining Research on Teachers of Color and Nontraditional Educator Pipelines." *Journal of Teacher Education*.

attendance, academic performance, and the numbers of credits earned toward graduation, as compared to their peers who did not take an ethnic studies course.<sup>7</sup>

We believe it is important to provide funding for this bill, and specifically for the provisions that remove financial barriers for Minnesotans of color who want to become teachers or who need support to stay in the profession, such as loan forgiveness, tuition, student teaching, room and board. We believe these provisions will be more impactful than funding focused on hiring bonuses and marketing.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Josh Crosson  
Executive Director

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<sup>7</sup> Donald, B. (January 2016). "Stanford study suggests academic benefits to ethnic studies courses." Stanford News.