

February 23, 2023

Dear Minnesota Legislators:

I'm writing to support House Bill 1407 to help dramatically expand a continuum of robotics and complementary workforce development programs geared to Black Indigenous Persons of Color (BIPOC). In particular I wish to lend by voice of support for the Minnesota STEM Partnership, led by Dr. Michael Wulf. This organization possesses an exemplary reputation serving elementary through high school BIPOC individuals throughout the Twin Cities area. The organization desires to also expand its unparalleled effective programs to other areas of the state with BIPOC concentrations of youth.

I have personally and professionally worked with Dr. Wulf, his staff, and the large audience MN STEM Partnership serves for nearly 12 years. Previous to the formation of the MN STEM Partnership several years ago, I met Dr. Wulf when he was a nearly full-time volunteer with the Twin Cities Chapter of Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA). This organization teaches web development and professional workforce skills to youth – moving them from the classroom to the boardroom.

This past December I left my position with Minnesota State IT Center of Excellence as a Director of IT Career Pathways and Partnerships and now serve in a voluntary role with the IT Center. I helped Dr. Wulf to follow his undying passion to support BIPOC youth to become the next, best Minnesota-grown technology talent, through many avenues including the now highly reputable Minnesota STEM Partnership. The IT Center working in partnership with his organization formed PowerUP IT four years ago to specifically inspire and empower youth in Minneapolis and St. Paul high schools to pursue technology education and career paths.

I am deeply aware of the essential work the Minnesota STEM Partnership (MNSTEM) has made over the past five+ years. I stand in support of House Bill #1407 and MNSTEM's vision to significantly broaden participation in advancing and emerging technologies like Robotics in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota. Their impressive and impactful work continues to significantly grow in Minnesota because they are deeply rooted in the BIPOC community, have excellent relationships with agencies, organizations, businesses, and community-based organizations. They produce and sustain remarkable results!

Their stated goal of influencing and guiding thousands of Minnesota BIPOC students is achievable, especially with your vote and support for their well-conceived and delivered initiatives. Their excellent work requires access to funding to continue the deepening of skills and broadening of impact across multiple Minnesota communities.

I am grateful for the impact MNSTEM has already made in the community I am proud to stand with Dr. Wulf, MNSTEM staff, and volunteers.

Thank you for your strong consideration of House File 1407 and the Minnesota STEM Partnership as a technology program leader serving the Minnesota BIPOC community.

Sincerely,

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