



MINNEAPOLIS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Urban Education. Global Citizens.

1250 West Broadway Ave.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404  
Phone: 612.668.0200  
Email: [Ed.Graff@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:Ed.Graff@mpls.k12.mn.us)

Ed Graff  
Superintendent

March 2, 2019

Representative Mary Kunesh-Podein  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
445 State Office Building  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Senator Chuck Wiger  
Minnesota Senate  
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2219  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Representative Kunesh-Podein and Senator Wiger,

I am writing to express my concerns with HF 1329/SF 1557, legislation that would significantly impact the Minneapolis Public Schools' efforts to recruit and retain high quality staff, in particular teachers of color and Indigenous teachers.

Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) recognizes the urgent need to increase the diversity of our staff in order to reflect the students, families, and communities that we serve. Throughout 2017 and 2018, MPS underwent an Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment, through which we identified structural and systemic barriers to recruiting, hiring and supporting teachers of color. MPS has been acting with urgency to improve how it hires and retains talented, diverse teachers and staff members.

### **Attracting High Quality Diverse Staff Will Be Compromised**

The state's adoption of a tiered licensure system is an important step forward for Minnesota school districts to attract high quality teacher candidates from other states, including states with much larger populations of diverse teachers and those with teacher preparation programs training large numbers of teachers of color, including HBCUs. Out-of-state recruitment is an essential element of districts' efforts to diversify our workforce and the state's current tiered licensure system provides these candidates, with experience in other states, the assurance of licensure when they move to the state. Because only 4% of our state's teachers are people of color or Indigenous and only 11% of teacher preparation programs' graduates are people of color or Indigenous, out-of-state recruitment is a critically important aspect of our efforts to diversify our staff.

HF 1329/SF 1557 will make this more difficult to recruit high quality teachers from other states. Reducing Tier 1 licensure renewals from three to one will make it much less attractive for out-of-state candidates to teach in Minnesota. This bill will also disproportionately impact candidates from low income households who may need additional time to complete their teacher preparation programs due to limited financial resources. Additionally, eliminating the licensure renewal allowance for teachers in shortage areas, teachers of color and career and technical education teachers will further dissuade potential candidates from moving to Minnesota in the future.

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**45% of Tier 1 and 2 Teachers Are People of Color or Indigenous**

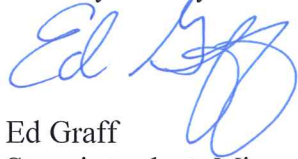
While 17% of all Minneapolis Public Schools' teachers identify as people of color or indigenous overall, 45% of Tier 1 and 2 (or the equivalent from previous licensure system) teachers identify as people of color or indigenous. This number would be reduced to 15% if we were to lose our current Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers of color. In addition, removing pathways for these educators to become Tier 3 teachers will have a chilling effect on diversifying our state's Tier 3 and 4 cohort.

The elimination of options for Tier 2 candidates to demonstrate their experience will force out many in the field who have extensive experience in their content area and have experience in front of classrooms. Again, this will disproportionately impact our most diverse cohort of teachers.

Reducing Tier 1 and 2 licensure renewal and eliminating the renewal allowance for teachers of color, teachers in shortage areas and career and technical educators will also push more of these educators out of the profession.

We all share the goal of having high quality teachers in every classroom. We can do that while encouraging more people of color and indigenous residents to consider the profession. Tiered licensure is a good step in that direction. This legislation would reverse the progress districts are making.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ed Graff  
Superintendent, Minneapolis Public Schools

CC: Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair, House Education Policy Committee  
Representative Jim Davnie, Chair, House K-12 Education Finance Committee  
Senator Carla Nelson, Chair, Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee