



January 26, 2021

Chair Richardson
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for HF217 Increase Teachers of Color Act

Dear Chair Richardson and members of the Committee,

When students of color have teachers of color, they're more likely to be placed in gifted programs¹ and less likely to experience disciplinary referrals.² They also feel more cared for and interested in their homework,³ and are ultimately more likely to graduate from high school.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶ We support this provision 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.

¹ 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*.

² 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*.

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

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

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

⁶ Gist, C., Bianco, 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*.

- Expanding Access to Tier 3 Licensure (Lines 9.13-9.23): Teachers from foreign countries face barriers to licensure because their preparation is not specifically recognized within our state’s licensure policies. We support the ability for teachers from other countries with 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 teacher preparation from 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 Latino students—who participate in ethnic studies made gains in attendance and academic performance as compared to their peers who did not take an ethnic studies course.⁷ We support expanding students’ access to ethnic studies curriculum as a proven way to close persistent gaps.
- Removing Financial Barriers: We believe it is important to provide funding for the provisions in this bill that remove financial barriers for Minnesotans of color who are often barred from the profession due to tuition, unpaid student teaching, and other expenses. Targeted funding addressing the immediate needs of prospective educators would be the reasonable approach to diversify our teacher workforce.

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

Sincerely,



Josh Crosson
Executive Director

⁷ Donald, B. (January 2016). “Stanford study suggests academic benefits to ethnic studies courses.” Stanford News.