

February 7, 2022

House Education Finance Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (“the Council”) is charged by the Legislature to advise the Legislature and the Governor on matters of importance to Minnesota’s Asian Pacific communities, and in doing so, advocate on behalf of these communities within state government. It is in this capacity that we write to express our support for the provisions of House File 1939 and House File 2944, which would increase funding for English Learner students.

In Minnesota, there are roughly 76,000 identified English Learner students—which is about 10% of the state’s student population. As a Council, we are all too aware of the disproportionate damage inflicted on our most vulnerable communities by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including on English Learner students and their families. Across all sectors of society, the pandemic has shed light on disparities in our communities and brought attention to the ways we as a state are falling short of serving all Minnesotans.

On the issue of education, the educational gaps that existed in our state have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. While understanding the long-term impacts will take years to better understand and overcome, we must act now to provide much-needed support for English Learner students to prevent these gaps from widening. These bills would address this critical need by providing for increased funding and other supports for these students. In particular, the provisions in House File 1939 to provide for increased support for English Learner staff and programs and the creation of a parent and community advisory council would help create a framework to responsively and accountably adapt school programs and curricula to align with the needs of English Learner students and families.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of these bills and urge their adoption to provide the resources and support that English Learner students and families need and deserve to reach their potential and thrive.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans