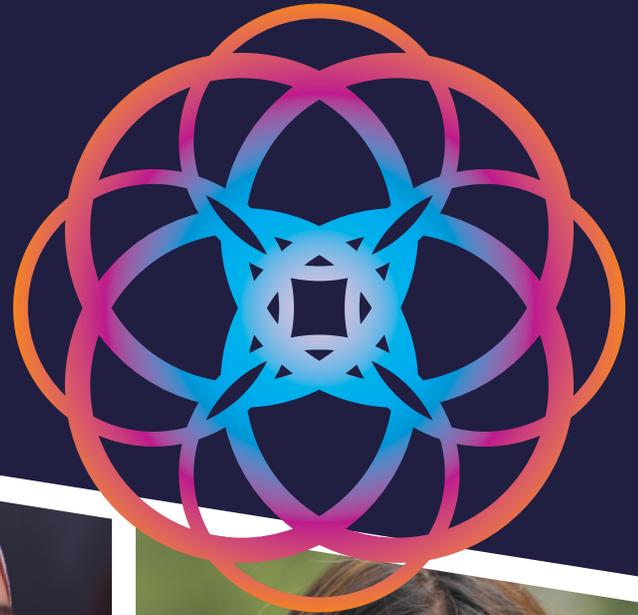


Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

# State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report | 2023

## Executive Summary





Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP)

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## The Research Collaborative Table (RCT)

MnEEP's Research Collaborative Table is comprised of academics and educational practitioners from across the state who are committed to using a race equity lens to guide essential research, policy recommendations, and best practices for building meaningful systems change which transforms systems, structures, and public narratives to advance race equity and excellence in education.



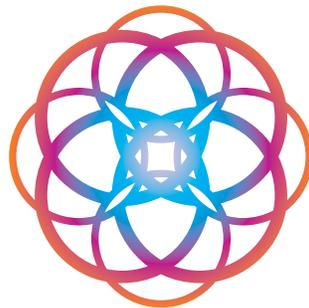
Minnesota  
**Education Equity**  
Partnership

Advancing **Race Equity** & Excellence

## **Working Together to Transform Systems**

To build a prosperous future for all Minnesotans, we must fundamentally transform the historical systems and structures that continue to disenfranchise Students of Color and American Indian students in Minnesota.

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) works alongside communities, educators, educational institutions and racial equity advocates at every level of systems change to inform, shape, and build a better education system that honors the goals and assets of students who are People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) and ensures each student in Minnesota has the opportunity to thrive.



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# Introduction

## Minnesota Education Equity Partnership

Executive Director, Hon. Carlos Mariani Rosa

Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) was the first to produce a comprehensive report in Minnesota on the state of academic outcomes of students who are People of Color and Indigenous (POCI). Over the course of 22 years, we published six reports. This report is different. The story, however, remains essentially the same; our state's educational outcomes with POCI students continue to be low and inequitable when contrasted with White students. While there have been some improvements over time, the fact remains that we have continued to implement an educational system that, while successful for some, lacks success with the majority of POCI students.

We could have presented a deep analysis of the assessment data to tell the depressing news of racial inequities yet again. Frankly, we have grown tired of repeating what we've been saying over two decades of reports: That there is a mismatch between our education system and the well-being of POCI students. We also chose not to emphasize conventional academic assessments showing POCI students falling short so as not to allow that to be misused by those who would point to the data to argue that something is amiss with our students.

We choose to tell stories where success can be had when grounding the educational experience in an overarching pedagogy that evokes the power of cultural validation.

### **There is nothing wrong with POCI students.**

#### **There is, however, something inherently wrong with the systems we use to educate Students of Color and American Indian students.**

There are daunting social realities “outside” of schools and colleges that disproportionately interfere with pathways for academic success for POCI students, and those should not be lightly dismissed. We believe public education should be successful for each and all students — regardless of systemic challenges — to obtain knowledge empowering them to be full members of society.

We know that as a distinct group in a society where race matters, the fact that POCI students are not faring well in our schools is well established and documented. We want to instead point to examples of success that invite us to understand the need for a validating human engagement that sets us on a path to developing the capacity for both the technical and adaptive skills to actively design new ways to interact that empower both students and their educators.

We choose to tell stories where success can be had when grounding the educational experience in an overarching pedagogy that evokes the power of cultural validation. This does not suggest there is a “magic bullet” for cultivating POCI student success, nor is it meant to dismiss the rich multiplicity of research-based instructional practices currently being pursued in many schools. It is our attempt to isolate what we believe is a critically important process in which to center those practices acknowledging our multiracial society's continuing struggle with racism.

This report will walk us through a brief description of the CLEAR Model (Hillstrom, 2009), which provides us with the building blocks for Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020). In addition, a metaframe is introduced as part of the research methodology known as the CLEAR Solutions Framework (Hillstrom, 2009). Through the use of the CLEAR Model and the CLEAR Solutions Framework we begin to understand the process that is used to describe the success stories in this report.

We share several case studies using CLEAR to demonstrate the effectiveness of centering Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) in delivering education experiences. Race Equity work requires engaging in activities beyond classroom instruction, the case studies will translate how the process steps of CLEAR are present in important actions like developing leadership, encouraging student voice, etc.

Each case study speaks to salient features of work to be done in our education systems. The report also makes recommendations for action in the areas covered by each case study.

In the full report, we also walk through a brief reflection of the conventional academic performance data as captured in the state’s governing K–12 accountability law, “World’s Best Workforce.” Again, it mostly confirms the persistence of racial inequities in academic outcomes and the failure of education systems to meet the needs of POCI students.

There is a considerable movement underfoot to negate the centering of POCI student cultural validation in our

schools. As we write this, legislation is being heard in many states to ban books recounting the historical facts of Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander and Indigenous communities. Exploring how racism works, its impact on our society, and even promoting inclusive practices are all proposed to cease using the force of law. This report does not intend to argue the social-political damage of such proposals as much as it is to point out that they are harmful to a key purpose of our educational systems: to create effective ways for each and all students to obtain and develop knowledge and skills, equipping them for self-agency and community building in a democracy.

It’s not just POCI students who will suffer from the reaction against Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L); it’s all of us. The demographics of prosperity are clear, much less so the moral expectation for a free people. Our collective well-being is tied to the well-being of POCI students. Centering the reality of validating a student’s culture — which means talking about racism — is a recipe for academic success for them and for all of us.

**We hope MnEEP’s new approach to presenting our *State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report* will offer more than a conventional, passive description of how POCI students are faring in our state’s education systems. Instead, we seek to empower you with a way of thinking and acting that can counter the posture the state of Minnesota seems to have taken of “doing more of the same,” and by doing so, accepts our failure to advance POCI students equitably as an inevitable reality.**



# New Ways to Solve Problems: Culturally Validating Pedagogy & Leadership

Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) is a central feature of educational reform and represents the cornerstone of an educational system rooted in democratic principles.

- **CVP/L validates each learner.** It communicates that your identity is complete and that you can inform society.
- **CVP/L connects to the human purpose** because it recognizes the worthiness and wholeness of the learner in their full beauty as a racial, ethnic, and cultural person.
- **CVP/L ratifies their identity** without needing to alter it in any way. It grants official sanction for diversity in our education institution leading to the legitimacy of each person.

Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) education mandates state that students’ values and interests belong in the learning environment, instruction, curriculum (pedagogy), and policy. Along with learning, values connect the students’ lived experiences in ways that make education progressive, democratic, and liberating.

In support of Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L), Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) offers the CLEAR Solutions Framework as a research metaframe. This metaframe comprises three tools—the CLEAR Model, the 3 Cs of Change, and the Capacity Equation—which combine to make up the CLEAR Solutions Framework (Hillstrom, 2009).

“The CLEAR Solutions Framework allows for direct application in research and the subsequent critical analysis process connected to any social or educational research project. The CLEAR Solutions Framework provides a consistent and systematic approach to problem-solving and strategic decision making, supporting educational excellence and equity.”

— Rev Hillstrom  
MnEEP Senior Director of Research, 2022

## The CLEAR Model Tool

Five essential building blocks exist for Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L). These pedagogical pillars must be present to ensure equitable learning structures are in place to support student-centered educational experiences. These building blocks of **Culture, Learning, Equitable, Achievement, and Responsive** comprise the **CLEAR Model**, which serves as the foundation for Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L).



**Cultural**  
Emphasizes the human purpose of what is being learned and it’s relationship to the students’ own culture.



**Learning**  
Encourages students to make choices in content and assessment methods based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths.



**Equitable**  
Respectful learning environments in which students’ racial, social, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity is valued and contributes to the learning experience.



**Achievement**  
Includes multiple ways to represent knowledge and skills and allows for attainment of outcomes at different points in time.

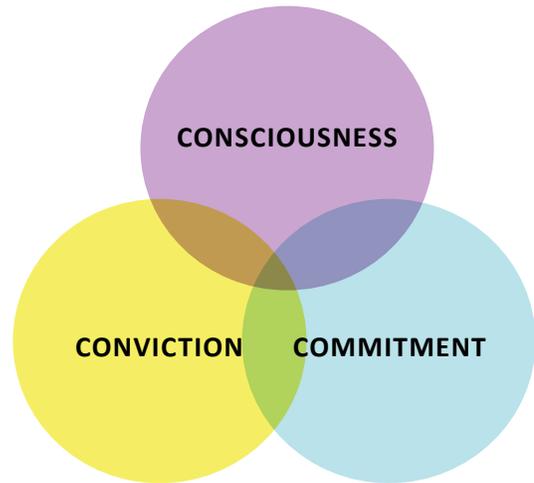


**Responsive**  
Through positive relationships, vigorous learning experiences are created involving higher order thinking and critical analysis used to address relevant, real(ness) world issues in an action-oriented manner.

## The 3 Cs of Change Tool

The CLEAR Solutions Framework begins with the **3 Cs of Change** tool that focuses on **Consciousness**, **Conviction**, and **Commitment**.

- **Consciousness** isolates race and represents quantitative and qualitative knowledge that require multiple perspectives to be present. This approach includes learning about personal stories that value racial and social identities.
- **Conviction** involves identifying current morals, beliefs, values, and mental models and measuring how they progressively shift.
- **Commitment** defines the action that impacts lived racial, social, and marginalized experiences.



## Capacity Equation Tool

The **Capacity Equation** (Hillstrom, 2010) tool allows for formative and summative assessments that can direct what is needed for building capacity, and what capacity is currently present for individuals and institutions. The Capacity Equation is a practical tool that allows for differentiating support and overall capacity building.

$$(\text{Knowledge} + \text{Skill}) \times \text{Will} = \text{Capacity}$$

**Knowledge** = Valued information

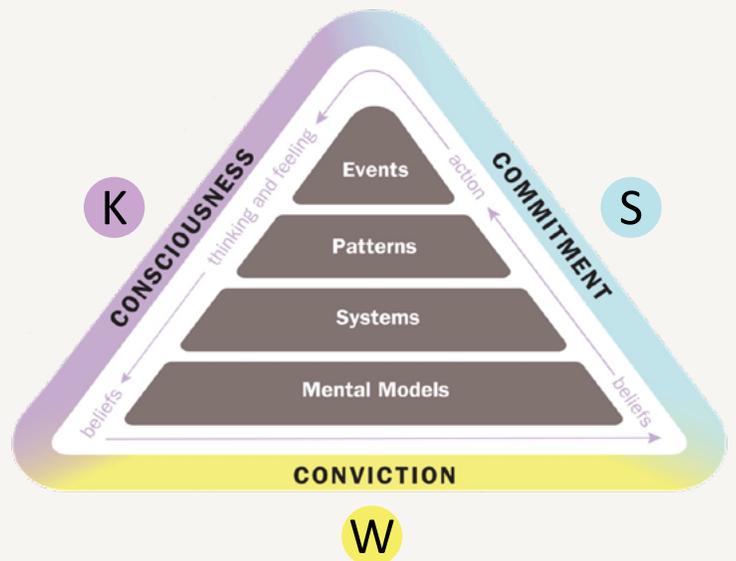
**Skill** = Ability to apply knowledge

**Will** = Personal investment

**Capacity** = Maximum aptitude

## The Clear Solutions Framework

Each case study methodology is grounded in the CLEAR Solutions Framework and provides evidence that when systems change to be more culturally validating in pedagogy and leadership, People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) students are successful. The answer is CLEAR, Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) represents liberation and justice for each student.



# Research Methodology for the Case Studies

In determining the appropriate research methodology for the case studies, purposeful thought and intentionality was placed on the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) values to ensure the presence of multiple perspectives as we work toward ensuring race equity and excellence for each student in Minnesota. This focus led to incorporating a **mixed methodological approach** for this report.

Mixed methodologies are not new and have become common within educational research. A mixed method was selected because, as the legendary research design expert John C. Creswell indicated, it allowed us to use the strength of both qualitative and quantitative analysis. In addition, the social problems addressed within the research are complex and require an interdisciplinary approach to the work (Creswell, 2009). However, what sets this report apart from others is the metaframe of the CLEAR Solutions Framework (Hillstrom, 2009), which guides the entire process.

The CLEAR Solutions Framework provides a focused, mixed methods approach that is solutions based and establishes a uniform platform for the individual primary investigator of the various case studies to research the disparities within the various oppressive components of education and provide a mechanism to highlight Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020).

The CLEAR Solutions Framework provides a language of change and a replicable structure for addressing inequities in our state's education system in new and powerful ways. The CLEAR Solutions Framework provides a consistent metaframe to bring to life the data connected to the human beings impacted by some of the agents of oppression, limiting Students of Color and American Indian students' educational experiences and creating educational debt (Ladson-Billings, 2006) for People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) students.

The research and its findings promote liberation by validating one's personal experiences as a student learner and potentially as an educator. The case studies collected within the report provide evidence of how multiple and diverse, evidence-based quantitative research and practice-based qualitative research perspectives for collecting, analyzing, and making meaning of data can effectively drive our understanding of how we can and should, socially construct liberating racial and social education rooted in democratic principles.



**EQUITY MATTERS.**

**JUSTICE MATTERS.**

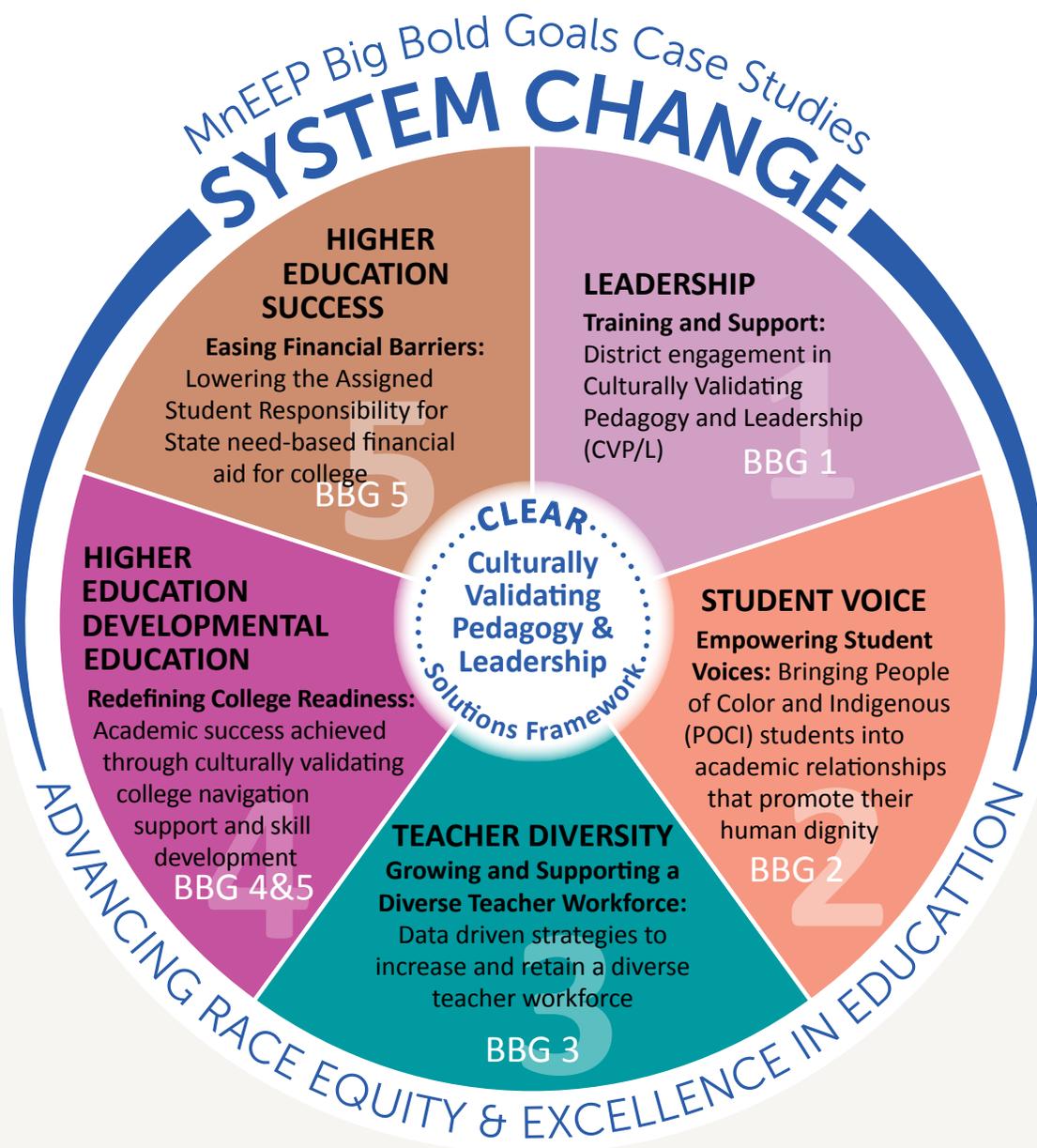
**HISTORY MATTERS.**

**RELATIONSHIPS MATTER.**

**SELF-ACTUALIZATION  
MATTERS.**

MnEEP Values

**MnEEP understands that justice and self-actualization matter. With that understanding as a guiding force, the metaframe provided by the CLEAR Solutions Framework propels the research approach for the overall report, enabling the research to humanize the findings and contribute to the transformative shifting of systems, public narrative, and policy.**



**BIG BOLD GOAL 1: Race Equity Planning** | Minnesota educational leaders and cultural communities create equitable education systems, structures and public narratives.

**BIG BOLD GOAL 2: School Climate** | Minnesota educational systems are designed to bring People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) students into relationships with schools and teachers that promote their human dignity.

**BIG BOLD GOAL 3: Teachers of Color** | Minnesota educational systems advance racially and culturally validating pedagogy and leadership (CVP/L) for teachers and students.

**BIG BOLD GOAL 4: Emerging Multilingual Learners (EML)** | Minnesota educational leaders embrace the language and culture of each student, and value the home language of Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian students as vital for their academic success.

**BIG BOLD GOAL 5: Higher Education Access and Equity** | Minnesota higher education systems are transformed to be racially just, culturally validating and accessible for Students of Color and American Indian students.

# Educational Equity Leadership Development

## Minnesota Education Equity Partnership

### Superintendent Race Equity Leadership Network

**BBG 1** | The main challenge we are addressing is Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership training and support for superintendents.

#### C1 CONSCIOUSNESS

For well over two decades, Minnesota has had one of the nation's largest racially predictable and persistent achievement gaps. Conversations about racially conscious teachers and curriculum have begun, but fewer discussions have concentrated on leadership for racial equity, particularly at the superintendent level. Despite 37% of the students in Minnesota schools identifying as People of Color and Indigenous (POCI), the racial makeup of system leadership is consistent with patterns in the teacher workforce and administration. As of 2018, only 7% of Minnesota superintendents were POCI (Smith, 2018). As the district's educational leader, the superintendent serves as the primary adviser to the school board on education and both should work in partnership to set priorities. But since most school board members are lay citizens and often bring only their own lived educational experience to their roles, those experiences — much like their superintendents — are also limited in racial diversity.

In 2013, the Cruz/Guzman lawsuit was filed against the State of Minnesota, alleging that Minnesota's education system was not "adequate" under the state's constitution. In 2016, superintendents from several public school districts worked

**If system leaders are not being trained and capacity is not being built to include a race lens, then even those who have a genuine desire to meet the needs of each student will not be able to advance systemic change.**

collaboratively to respond to the lawsuit and the changing student demographics in Minnesota. The process provided qualitative data based on the personal stories of POCI students and families about their lived experiences in E–12 education, including how leadership did not reflect their racial and ethnic identities and how that leadership was not culturally validating.

The plan developed from this process, known as Reimagine Minnesota, was finalized and distributed in 2018. The intended outcome was to address systemic inequities so that each student in Minnesota schools would experience academic and educational success. Yet, so far the plan has not produced the desired results and lacks authentic voices of POCI students, families, and educators.

#### C2 CONVICTION

Many scholars have provided compelling rationales for centering race in leadership development and practice (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Gooden & Dantley, 2012; Khalifa et al., 2016; Lopez, 2016; Santamaria, 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2015; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). If system leaders are not being trained and capacity is not being built ((Knowledge + Skill) x Will = Capacity) (Hillstrom, 2010) to include a race lens, then even those who have a genuine desire to meet the needs of each student will not be able to advance systemic change. Without trained leadership, it is difficult to filter through conflict and opposition that can be expected when school policies and practices include confronting systemic racism. Further, research conducted for The American Superintendent 2020 Decennial Study (Tienken and Domenech, 2021)

produced by the School Superintendents Association (AASA) reported that although 90% of school superintendents said conversations about race and equity were extremely or very important, only 21% said they were “very well prepared” for that responsibility. To address this, Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) collaborated with leaders from the Courageous Leadership Institute at Minnesota State University–Mankato. This partnership led to the creation of the Superintendent Race Equity Leadership (SREL) Network.

**90%** of school superintendents said conversations about race and equity were extremely or very important, yet only **21%** said they were “very well prepared” to have race and equity conversations

### C3 COMMITMENT

The purpose of the **MnEEP Superintendent Race Equity Leadership Network** is to inspire, equip, and connect E–12 Minnesota superintendents as they strive to implement best practices in Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020). Superintendents meet six half-days per year in a two-year cohort model with three facilitators.

The SREL Network provides evidence that superintendents benefit from a collective effort in a trusted space that focuses on leading courageously with a race equity lens and offers multiple ways to represent knowledge and skills that allows for the attainment of outcomes at different

points in time. In annual evaluations, **100% of the SREL Network superintendents reported: the cohort helped build capacity to advance their own learning about racism and racial equity; they learned more about racial equity policy/practice development and review; they were able to take specific tools back to share with their school systems and leadership teams; and they transferred meaningful learning into specific commitments to create movement toward racial equity in their districts.** Originally, the SREL Network was designed to be a two-year experience for superintendents. But, at the end of the second year, they requested a continuation so MnEEP supported a third year of the cohort.

#### Specific goals of the SREL Network

- To provide support to engage in shared understandings of the connections between Will and Skill in developing school cultures that ground the use of a race equity lens in school decision-making.
- To deepen and reinforce courageous leadership (Will) to follow the moral imperative of racial equity.
- To provide superintendents with practical leadership strategies and tools (Knowledge + Skill) to make actionable and effective steps to advance race equity in their school systems.
- To build rural and metro area cross-district partnerships, networking systems, and accountability for the implementation of race equity policy and practices to reduce the isolation inherent in the superintendency role.



### Call to Advance

**Based upon the case study findings,** Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) training needs to be a priority to advance race equity and excellence. This points to a need for more consistent, intentional preparation for racially conscious superintendents to lead for educational equity in their districts.

- **ACTION STEP**  
Require that K–12 district superintendents complete an approved cultural competency leadership training, similar to the teacher requirement as defined in Minnesota Administrative Rule 8710.0310, for a five-year renewal license.

# CLEAR Student Voice

## Empowering Student Voice in Osseo Area Schools

**BBG 2** | The main challenge is that Minnesota educational systems are not currently designed using Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership to bring People of Color and Indigenous students into relationships with schools and teachers that promote their human dignity.

### C1 CONSCIOUSNESS

Many People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) students in Minnesota’s educational systems have been impacted by racist language, microaggressions and racial bias. Given these events, many POCI students have experienced a negative relationship with teachers, peers and the educational system which is intended to serve them.

To help understand their experience this case study uses the data from the Minnesota Student Survey, which was developed in 1989 and modified over time, to monitor risk and protective behaviors among students. While many categories have remained consistent over time, others have been adjusted to reflect current priority topics. The survey focus for this case study is Teacher-Student Relationships. The demographic groups included are Black, African, African American, Asian, Native Pacific Islander, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Latino, and White students who were in Grade 9 in 2019.

The student survey data indicated a lack of Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) which, if present, would lead to meaningful interconnectedness between students and staff. Its absence reinforced the values of historic hierarchy and supremacy

#### Compliance-Based Pedagogy

##### Administrators and Teachers...

- **Talking but not listening**
- **Denying students’ lived experiences**
- **Jumping to often incorrect or misinterpreted statistics**
- **Embracing theories of generalities**
- **Reframing racialized issues**
- **Focusing solely on the personal responsibility of the students and not the system that generated the inequities**

in education systems rooted in outdated compliance-based pedagogy that exacerbate racial divides.

Months prior to the murder of George Floyd, students engaged in a CLEAR Student Voice lesson titled, “Mighty Times: The Children’s March.” In this lesson, students were able to use the CLEAR Model (Hillstrom, 2009) in combination with the Courageous Conversation® Compass to process and express empathy and concern when they have experienced bias and recognized their responsibility to stand up to exclusion, prejudice and injustice. The CLEAR Model was the guiding portion to centering all of the CLEAR Student Voice lessons in CVP/L. The components of the CLEAR Model are and continue to be explicit in The Mighty Times lesson. CLEAR Student Voice leaders engaged in discussions about the ability of today’s young people to be catalysts for positive social change.

In the days following the delivery of the Mighty Times Lesson, CLEAR Student Voice Leaders attended protests and wrote to the Mayor of Minneapolis. Many CLEAR Student Leaders were seeking additional, productive ways to amplify their voices and make principled decisions about when and how to take a stand against bias and injustice in their everyday lives. This was the beginning of what would become a peaceful, student-led protest.

What was coined as the “March on Grove” was organized by CLEAR Student Voice Leaders in partnership with district authorities and local police agencies. The March on Grove took place on June 8, 2020, and was a mile-and-a-half march through the community in which the students lived and attended school. The event culminated at a local outdoor venue where students led passionate performances and encouraged unity and justice in spite of the inequities in their community. Hundreds of students, educators and community members were in attendance at the March on Grove regardless of their racial, economic, age, cultural and social class.



CCX Community News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg8gNjvRzJ8>

## C2 CONVICTION

The data connected to the student survey also helped establish the mental model that was present at the time, specifically as it related to the value of the students' voice and the importance of quality relationships. Peter Senge, throughout his work, suggests relationships provide a place of interconnectedness and offers that the greatest challenges we face as a society are often due to the lack of awareness that we as a society understand about the depth of interconnectedness needed for healthy communities.

An intentional and necessary place for Clear Student Voice to start building CVP/L consciousness was "The Pedagogy of Confidence: Inspiring High Intellectual Performance in Urban Schools," written by Dr. Yvette Jackson. The belief of Dr. Yvette Jackson's Pedagogy of Confidence is a shift in instructional focus from what must be taught to maximize learning artfully using the science of learning to create a "gifted education focusing on cultivating student strengths."

**The idea in the Pedagogy of Confidence is that learning is a cooperative process.** Broadening the frame of reference for all who have an influence on the destinies of our students: Teachers, principals, superintendents, policymakers and community groups, is of the utmost importance because it offers the hope that they will appreciate the fated reality that students' motivation to learn is affected by teachers' confidence in their students potential, concomitant with their own competence to nurture this potential (Jackson, 2011). Layer Dr. Yvette Jackson's work in Pedagogy of Confidence with the work of the National Urban Alliance (NUA) and the CLEAR Model and you have the concept of CLEAR Student Voice.

Additionally, Dr. Yvette Jackson suggests that High Operational Practices will inspire High Intellectual Performance in students.

### The Seven High Operational Practices are:

- Identifying and Activating Student Strengths
- Building Relationships
- Eliciting High Intellectual Performance
- Providing Enrichment
- Integrating Prerequisites for Academic Learning
- Situating Learning in the Lives of Students
- Amplifying Student Voices

These Seven High Operational Practices are included in each CLEAR Student Voice lesson and are the essential parts, which are directly connected to the five distinctive building blocks of the CLEAR Model (Culture, Learning, Equitable, Achievement and Responsive), and facilitate students' exploration and motivation for self-directed learning and self-actualization. High Intellectual Performance reflects the three beliefs gleaned from Dr. Rueben Feuerstein's theory and methodology as well. As referenced above, intelligence is modifiable. Secondly, all students benefit from a focus on High Intellectual Performance, and lastly, learning is influenced by the interaction of culture, language, and cognition (Jackson, 2011).

## C3 COMMITMENT

Commitment towards CVP/L was present in the new mental models, based on the student perspectives from the Minnesota Department of Education data, which led to the March On Grove event, is the intentional importance of including and empowering a student's voice. With this, it is critical to understand the purpose of CLEAR Student Voice lessons. Each CLEAR Student Voice lesson focuses on the students' learning and is influenced by the interaction and inclusion of each student's frame of reference. CLEAR Student Voice is a student-centered learning experience and each lesson was created by using and understanding how the CLEAR Model can impact student programming at the secondary level. Overall, the CLEAR Model guides and strengthens students' confidence, critical thinking and analytical skills.

With over 200 secondary student leaders as members of CLEAR Student Voice, the impact made on the education system that serves them can be seen and measured. Evidence of this is the adoption of school board-approved policies and resolutions. After the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, some CLEAR Student Voice Leaders attended protests in Downtown Minneapolis, some wrote to the Mayor of Minneapolis and all of them carried this trauma in their bodies and felt unseen and unheard. This moment and many others in the history of our country have created body trauma and traumatic retention. There are many systemic adaptations that provide evidence of important cultural, and human change in policies that directly impact students, such as the Asian and Pacific Islander Policy (AAPI Policy) in addition to the George Floyd Resolution.

Overall, the CLEAR Model guides and strengthens students' confidence, critical thinking and analytical skills.

“CLEAR Student Voice allowed and encouraged me to be more comfortable to speak in public places and share my opinions free of judgment. I feel more closely connected to my peers and confident that my experiences matter...”

—CLEAR Student Voice member

The commitment to acknowledging, validating and furthermore creating actionable steps to change the lived experiences of POCI students' is critical in educating and impacting the system which leads to a shift in patterns and events from a student perspective. When students were asked about their experience being a CLEAR Student Voice Member and the impact on their relationships with school, staff, peers, and self, they stated: “CLEAR Student Voice allowed and encouraged me to be more comfortable to speak in public places and share my opinions free of judgment. I feel more closely connected to my peers and confident that my experiences matter and changes in systems can be made when student voices are part of decisions being made.”

## Call to Advance

**Based upon the case study findings,** the current educational system is based on a system that furthers the racial divide. Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) empowers People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) student voices and brings students into relationships with schools and teachers that promote their human dignity.

### ACTION STEP

**All local school districts across the state must incorporate student-led groups to advise school board policies and instructional practices and take action on their recommendations for advancing inclusive educational systems in which students' racial and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes.**



# Elevating, Demystifying and Diversifying the Teaching Profession

## TeachMN20/20

**BBG 3** | The main challenge we are addressing is prioritizing a shift towards Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership in the current narrative around the teaching profession to promote the recruitment and retention of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers.

### C1 CONSCIOUSNESS

In order to imagine and advance systems-level changes to address the persistent teacher diversity gap in Minnesota, it is important to understand the historical and current systems at play that may be contributing to the racially predictable gap.

In the United States, People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) students outnumber White students, 50.3% and growing. This shift happened in the fall of 2014. Now, POCI students are the numeric majority. Yet, the latest data show that diversity in our nation's teaching workforce is not keeping up with the changing demographics of the students. In 2011–12, 82% of the nation's public school teachers were White. Six years later, the percentage decreased by just 3%, showing that in 2017–18, the nation's public schools had 79% White teachers (Will, 2020; NCES, 2021). While a 3% increase is an improvement, the enrollment of POCI students in public schools consistently outpaces the increase of teachers who share their racial and ethnic identities (NCES, 2022).

The student body in Minnesota has become more diverse in the last 10 years, increasing from 25% to 38% Students of Color/American Indian students, while the teaching workforce remains predominantly White, changing slightly from 96% to 93% over that same time period.

#### In Minnesota:

**38% Students of Color/American Indian Students**

**93% White Teachers**

**Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT) have a direct impact on student performance, especially Students of Color and American Indian students.**

**Additionally, a racially diverse teacher workforce is beneficial to and essential for each student to succeed socially, emotionally, and academically (Barshay, 2018).**

The overwhelming benefits of recruiting and retaining Teachers of Color and American Indian teachers are foundational to Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) and are in alignment with the CLEAR Model (Hillstrom, 2009) supporting the work of racial equity and educational excellence.

Choosing to work in the education sector, especially teaching, is not as prominently on our students' radar as other career choices. Minnesota has a shortage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs has declined over the years (Schaeffer, 2022). Minnesota lacks a central resource for prospective teachers to gather information as they explore a better understanding of why and how to become a teacher. Given the persistence of this colossal gap, it is no wonder that many youth and adults had not ONE Teacher of Color and/or American Indian teacher throughout their K–12, and sometimes even K–16 experiences.

**With more Teachers of Color, all students have opportunities to experience positive cross-cultural relationships which expose them to real-world perspectives outside of the dominant narrative that is pervasive in popular culture and media. Experiences like this allow students to engage in higher-order thinking and critical analysis to address real-world issues in an action-oriented manner.**

## C2 CONVICTION

Advancing systems change must include transforming conviction which will impact the public narrative about the teaching profession. Systematic racism which continues to contribute to the historical trauma endured by our communities of color and American Indian communities is playing out even more acutely in our own backyards than on the national stage (University of Minnesota Extension, 2020). Teachers are people who actually contribute to the solutions, yet far too often, their voices are not included in the discourse. **The paradox is this: On an individual level, people are willing to acknowledge the impact and influence of a single teacher in a person's life. As a collective, however, the teaching profession is plagued with an imbalance of discouraging and disparaging remarks about the profession that perpetuate a narrative that teaching is not a desirable or respectable profession.**

In order to have an impact on the explicit structural change in policy, practices, and resource flows, we must work across sectors and shift power dynamics in order to transform the relationships between people who make up the system. In addition, we must pay attention to the implicit mental models, attitudes, and assumptions that are foundational drivers to transformative change.

**IMAGINE that everyone is part of the solution, and is a champion for the teaching profession** (e.g., encouraging youth to enter the profession.) “Transforming a system is really about transforming the relationships between people who make up the system” (Kania et al., 2018). Ultimately, with these convictions, the desired state can be achieved by cultivating a society where the teaching profession is highly regarded, respected, and prestigious.

With more Teachers of Color, all students have opportunities to experience positive cross-cultural relationships which expose them to real-world perspectives outside of the dominant narrative.

## C3 COMMITMENT

In 2015, **TeachStrong** (Center for American Progress, 2015), a national campaign to modernize and elevate the teaching profession, launched and was backed by more than sixty diverse and powerful education organizations.

Through early connections to TeachStrong, a small group of Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) staff and board members (representing local school districts) joined representatives from state agencies to participate in important convenings funded and organized by the TeachStrong Campaign. This group gathered to discuss progress in Minnesota and worked with other states to learn key strategies for advancing MnEEP's Big Bold Goal #3, increasing Teachers of Color so that students see themselves and their communities reflected in others.

**Teach MN 2020** began as a follow-up to the national TeachStrong initiative. By early 2020, six local colleagues had grown the initiative to over 800 educators/stakeholders that were engaged in regular updates of our work. Attendance at quarterly convenings started at close to 50 people and continued to grow. This is because the work connects to the essence of the people involved and their human purpose.

MnEEP also collaborated with other partnering organizations to plan gatherings outside of the quarterly cadence (e.g., PELSB, MACTE, TOCAIT Coalition). Despite the sudden unexpected shift caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, MnEEP continued to be intentional in its approach to holding virtual space for these important conversations and opportunities for action around addressing the need to diversify the teacher corps in Minnesota.

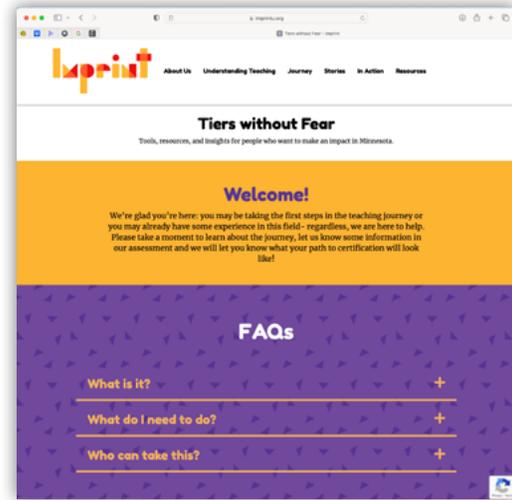
As part of the feedback shared from the convenings, work began on developing a framework and tools to elevate the teaching profession. **ImprintU.org** is the go-to resource for exploring teaching opportunities and inspiring users to enter the profession. The early motivation and ideas of ImprintU.org were conceived in the fall of 2016.

The ImprintU.org website was developed and launched with initial content and functionality in the fall of 2017.

In fall 2018, MnEEP began to focus on BBG #3 with ImprintU.org, coinciding with the legislative launch of Minnesota's new tiered licensure system. Ironically, this new system was created to ensure more pathways for POCI candidates to enter the teaching profession, yet the burden fell mostly on potential teachers to figure out the

ImprintU was envisioned and developed as a resource to meet three goals:

- 1 Attract new and non-traditional POCI teacher candidates to the profession.
- 2 Elevate the perception of teaching as a profession, dispelling falsehoods and misconceptions, demystifying the practice, and reframing public discourse about the profession.
- 3 Make learning and discovering the various ways one can become a teacher an interesting and easy process by aggregating useful information about the teacher career pathway.



highly complex “flat” documentation of requirements of different users. Hence, “Tiers without Fear” (TwF) was born as an interactive tool that could eliminate the complexities of Minnesota’s tiered licensure system. Users access the tool through the BECOME page of ImprintU.org. In deep partnership with the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), this tool is designed to help users easily navigate and make sense of the tiered licensure system. Launched in July 2021, TwF was marketed in partnership with PELSB’s communication team.

After a visit to Oregon in February 2017, MnEEP embarked on a research project in collaboration with a team of graduate students at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The research was

conducted and a report was produced in September 2018 entitled *The Tale of Two States: How Policy and Funding Affect Efforts to Diversify the Teaching Corps in Oregon and Minnesota*.

This research study found that Minnesota’s public funding of \$60 million (in today’s dollars) for the past 28 years since 1991 has focused almost exclusively on the “Become” phase of the Teacher Journey framework of Explore, Become, Grow, and Thrive. Fortunately, since 2020, through the continued advocacy of the Increase of Teachers of Color Act advocated by Increase TOCAIT Coalition (which is fiscally sponsored by MnEEP), significant public funding has been invested towards increasing and retaining a diverse teaching workforce in Minnesota.

## Call to Advance

**Based upon the case study findings,** Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) requires a diverse teacher workforce that reflects the student population. To this end, we must elevate the teaching profession and attract more people to become teachers, especially from communities of color and American Indian communities.

### ACTION STEP

**The State must design a coordinated, measurable accountability system and a sustainable policy and investment framework to increase and retain a diverse teacher workforce in Minnesota.**



# Higher Education Developmental Education

## Effective and Sustained Support for Adult Learners at College Readiness Academy

**BBG 4 & 5** | The main challenge we are addressing is building Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership leading to access and success in college for under-prepared adult learners.

### C1 CONSCIOUSNESS

Preparing students for the academic demands of college is far from a new idea. Starting in the 1820s, formal courses in college preparation began to be developed, beginning with Harvard offering the first known remedial course (Arendale, 2006, p. 9). However, the needs and demographics of students have changed drastically from these first remedial courses, which almost exclusively served privileged White males (Arendale, 2002).

A shift occurred from the 1940s when developmental education courses were created to provide college preparation coursework to primarily female and People of Color, and Indigenous (POCI) students not yet perceived as ready for college-level work. In fact, national statistics have found that “Black and Hispanic students are disproportionately assigned to developmental education, and Black and Hispanic students who take developmental courses graduate at lower rates than White and Asian students who take developmental courses — compounding attainment gaps” (Ganga, Mazzariello, and Edgecombe, 2018). These practices are putting our Black and Hispanic students at more of a disadvantage and increasing their risk of not completing college with their degrees.

Moreover, placement into these courses was solely based upon a standardized test, created by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), with the hope that, in the minds of some, these “scientific instruments” would “help ensure that meritocracy would win over heritage, economic, and political influence when making college entrance decisions” (Arendale, 2002, p. 14). They also hoped that this kind of standardized test could serve as a sort of high

school graduation criterion. These tests have historically measured reading, math, and writing. In order to staff these courses at the colleges, the courses were tied into the regular college faculty contracts.

In addition, historically, developmental education students have been recruited for economic gain by institutions during times of low student enrollment (Arendale, 2002). Moreover, some of our most vulnerable populations of students are the hardest hit by these practices: “Discriminatory practices — both formal and informal — would commonly deny service to females and students of color” (Arendale, 2002, p.18). That history has manifested in recent years in the testing, placement, and financial aid practices at Minnesota community colleges. It is this foundation of developmental education that is diametrically opposed to Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) which recognizes the worthiness and wholeness of the learner in their full beauty as a racial, ethnic, and cultural person. CVP/L grants official sanction for diversity in our education institution leading to the legitimacy of each person.

**Based upon this purpose of preparing students for college, developmental education coursework is *not effective*. Furthermore, developmental education courses are a burden on adult learners, especially immigrant learners who have had interrupted education or were educated in other countries or who speak more than one language.**

A common discriminatory practice is connected to the testing policies which require any students who indicate that they speak more than one language to take an English Second Language (ESL) test, even if they are native English

speakers. Based on this assessment, many students are placed into ESL classes. **Once these students are placed into an ESL class, they are tracked in ESL which can mean a lot of time and money spent on coursework that is not specifically linked to credits required for their degree completion.** In many cases, these students mistakenly believe that they are getting college credits for these ESL courses. Not only is this expensive and time-consuming, it also takes an emotional toll on students and can lower their self-esteem and motivation. Specifically, it does not create opportunities for a student's own racial, ethnic, or linguistic identities to be valued and contribute to their education.

**Students placed in developmental education are 74% more likely to drop out of programs than their peers.**

The return on investment is low for students who are placed in developmental education. Students placed in developmental education are 74% more likely to drop out than their peers who are not. They tend to drop out at

higher rates and not complete their degrees, thus leading to a reduction in students enrolled and tuition paid to the institution (TerraLuna Collaborative, 2021). **Ultimately, developmental education derails thousands of students each year from completing a license or degree, which has a negative impact on the students, their families and community, the college system and the economy.**

## C2 CONVICTION

The predominant mental model states that standardized tests are a valid measure of a student's readiness for college, and often these tests are used as the only measure. Furthermore, when it comes to language abilities, an existing mental model is present that suggests that native speakers of English learn differently than non-native speakers of English. This mental model is not accurate because research, particularly the work of Malcolm Knowles and his five assumptions about adult learners (as described in Cochrane, C. & Brown, S., 2016), indicates each student learns in their own unique way as an individual, not as a linguistic or cultural group.

Current harmful mental models suggest that student learning deficits can be corrected through additional remedial topic-based coursework. Underlying this is the

**Current harmful mental models suggest that student learning deficits can be corrected through additional remedial topic-based coursework. Underlying this is the assumption that there is something deficient in the student rather than reflecting on whether or not the pedagogy needs to be modified.**

assumption that there is something deficient in the student rather than reflecting on whether or not the pedagogy needs to be modified. The systemic failure lies within the pedagogy, including the environment, instruction, and content. Moreover, there is an assumption that the student isn't doing well because they do not have certain academic skills. In response, colleges have added more and more courses rather than providing a learning approach based on CVP/L. Putting the burden on students to spend more money on coursework is a diatonic opposition to CVP/L.

## C3 COMMITMENT

College success for People of Color Indigenous (POCI) adult learners is best supported through CVP/L with navigation along with academic skill development supported by teachers and navigators who have a lived immigration experience or second language learning experience. It is essential for teachers to be aware of how the human purpose is the center of learning and creating authentic relationships with their students. Centering the human purpose invites teachers to center the student's identity at the core of their learning.

A commitment must center around new mental models which are focused on systemic shortcomings rather than student deficit.

**A commitment must center around new mental models which are focused on systemic shortcomings rather than student deficit.**

## Commitment to new mental models must incorporate several fundamental convictions:

- There is no difference in the learning process for adults regardless of language background.
- Students learn best when skills are integrated and when they can draw on their backgrounds and richly lived experiences. Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership requires that equitable educational experiences provide respectful learning environments in which students' racial, social, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity is valued and contributes to the learning experience.
- In addition, it is critically important that the pedagogical experience centers student voice by encouraging students to make choices in content and assessment methods based on their experiences, values, needs and strengths.
- Not only does each student's voice matter, but their voices should also have an impact on the decisions being made in the learning environment.
- Finally, concerning the value of education, students who pay for a college education should get a college degree, and taking a college preparation course for free does not lessen student motivation.

Through the College Readiness Academy, an Adult Basic Education program at the International Institute of Minnesota, students receive navigation support from the moment they enter the classes until they complete their college careers. Navigators provide help for students who are going to college but are not affiliated with any one

college. Furthermore, students receive intensive 1:1 support from the navigators. Navigators spend an average of 7.5 hours per year with college-attending students, meaning adult learners who need additional navigation support even after they are accepted into college.

We are seeing several new patterns by using CVP/L offered through the College Readiness Academy. First of all, students are learning more about the system and making better choices for themselves and their academic paths, which is all about students making choices for themselves depending on each of their unique life circumstances. Specifically, they are able to save time and money and are feeling supported in college from the beginning to the end. Overall, more students are graduating in less time, and while spending less, and/or going into less debt or not going into debt at all.

82% of College Readiness Academy adult learners graduate college

Furthermore, more students are persisting through college and graduating. 82% of College Readiness Academy adult learners who attend college persist toward graduation. As

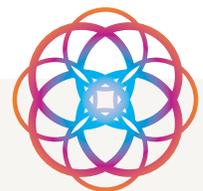
they find success in achieving their own academic goals, students are referring family, friends and community members to the program to follow their own successful journey. It shows that the pedagogy is responsive and allows students to take action in their lives and achieve concrete results for themselves and their families. Ultimately, because of College Readiness Academy and Navigation, students are empowered to better leverage their educational backgrounds and experiences, where applicable, to achieve their career goals and earn higher wages.

## Call to Advance

*Based upon the case study findings*, the current state of developmental education is not culturally validating. Adult Basic Education programs like College Readiness Academy enable all students to have a fair shot at college access and completion through Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020).

### ACTION STEP

**All higher education institutions must end the use of developmental coursework. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education must assess, report on and fund Adult Basic Education rooted in Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L).**



# Access and Success in Higher Education

## Underinvestment in People of Color and Indigenous Students within the Minnesota State Grant

**BBG 5** | The main challenge we are addressing is the need for Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership to interrupt the invalid assumption that students can afford to cover fifty percent of their college costs.

### C1 CONSCIOUSNESS

Those with higher educational attainment have higher incomes, lower unemployment and higher homeownership. In Minnesota, significant gaps exist in educational attainment between People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) and White people (Table 3). Economic inequities are rooted in many facets of Minnesota’s history of underinvestment in POCI students and communities. Lack of investment in POCI

students to access higher education represents one of those facets. Professor Samuel L. Myers, Jr. has named this disparity, “The Minnesota Paradox,” with Minnesota being one of the best states to live in but the worst state for Black people (Myers, 2020).

In Minnesota, people with higher educational attainment experience lower unemployment and higher incomes (Tables 4 and 5).

TABLE 3:  
**Educational Attainment of Minnesotans 25+ by Race/Ethnicity**

|                                | Less than High School | High School or GED | Some College no Degree | Associate Degree | Bachelor’s Degree | Graduate or Professional Degree |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| White non-Hispanic             | 4%                    | 25%                | 21%                    | 12%              | 26%               | 13%                             |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 16%                   | 30%                | 27%                    | 12%              | 10%               | 5%                              |
| Asian                          | 18%                   | 16%                | 12%                    | 7%               | 26%               | 20%                             |
| Black                          | 18%                   | 28%                | 23%                    | 10%              | 14%               | 7%                              |
| Hispanic/Latino                | 25%                   | 27%                | 18%                    | 8%               | 14%               | 8%                              |
| Two or More Races              | 6%                    | 22%                | 29%                    | 12%              | 21%               | 11%                             |
| Another Race                   | 34%                   | 29%                | 14%                    | 6%               | 11%               | 5%                              |

2019 American Community Survey 1-year estimates

TABLE 4:  
**Median Annual Earnings for Minnesotans 25+**

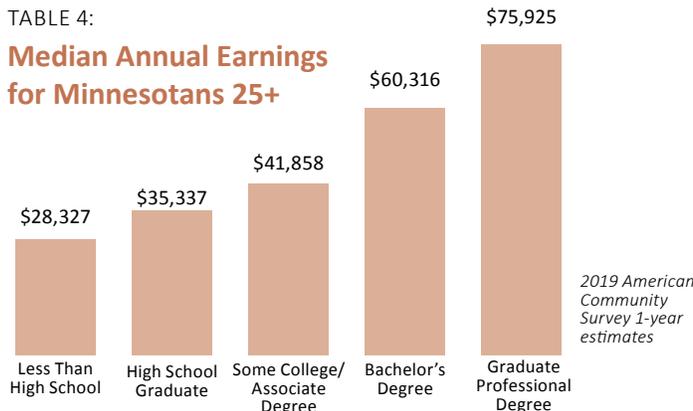
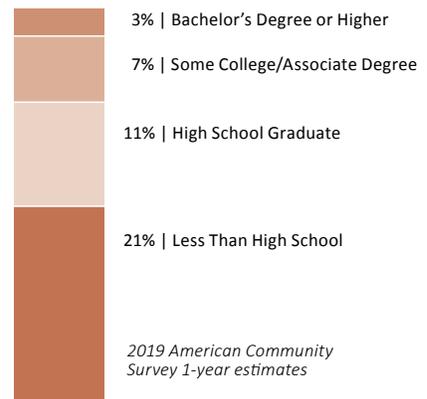


TABLE 5:  
**Share of Minnesotans 25+ Living in Poverty**



Minnesota’s 2025 educational attainment goal states that 70% of Minnesotans ages 25 to 44 of all races and ethnicities should have a post-secondary degree or certificate by 2025. Since the legislation was enacted in 2015, gains have been made for all races and ethnicities. But all races and ethnicities are still falling short of the 70% goal, and there continue to be large differences in educational attainment by race and ethnicity (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2021). Without a move towards Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020), which supports significant changes and investments, it will be difficult for Minnesota to reach this goal in the coming decades, let alone in 2025.

The Minnesota State Grant program, first funded by the legislature in 1984, is the State’s primary need-based financial aid program to help low- and middle-income students cover college costs.

**The legislature established the Minnesota State Grant program based on the following principles:**

- **The student’s responsibility to invest in his or her own future**
- **Reduce the disproportionate cost burden on low- and middle-income families**
- **Provide students with a choice among the postsecondary institutions and programs that best meet their educational goals and needs through providing financial support to enroll in certificate, two- or four-year programs at public or private institutions**

The legislature has recognized that the Minnesota State Grant was asking families to pay more than they could afford (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2021). The state, however, has not adjusted the Assigned Student Responsibility. Students today are still expected to cover 50% of their college tuition and living costs, the same share as in 1984 when college tuition and living costs were much lower than today, and the overall debt burden to students was lower.

After adjusting for inflation, tuition and fees have increased significantly in every higher education sector in the state between the 1989–90 and 2021–22 academic years: 201% at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, 199% at Minnesota State Universities, 134% at private non-profit

**Increase in the Maximum Minnesota State Grant 1990 to 2022 (adjusted for inflation)**

- 93%** Minnesota State Colleges
- 142%** Minnesota State Universities
- 28%** University of Minnesota
- 28%** Private Nonprofit Colleges

colleges, and 72% at Minnesota State Community and Technical Colleges (Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 2021). And between 1990 and 2020, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Minnesota increased by 22% (iProperty Management, 2020). Unfortunately, the Minnesota State Grant has not increased at a rate to keep up with college costs.

Minnesota’s college student demographics have shifted over the past 40 years, but the Minnesota State Grant program has not adjusted its expectations to meet the financial need of students as college tuition and living costs have increased. It has thus fallen short in reducing the cost burden on low- and middle-income students and their families, which has prevented many students from having the choice to enroll in the post-secondary program that best aligns with their education and career needs, goals and interests (Dueñes and Soria, 2020).

**C2 CONVICTION**

Embedded into the Minnesota State Grant program through the Design for Shared Responsibility is the expectation that students should make “a significant investment in their own future” through the Assigned Student Responsibility. Unfortunately, this expectation has hindered educational opportunities for many students, particularly Students of Color and American Indian students. Central to the current mental model, or a common way of thinking about the issue in a more scaled-down way to simplify complex ideas, is the persistent idea that higher education is primarily a private good. Thus, students need to have “skin in the game” to contribute to college costs. This commitment helps them take college seriously and succeed while ignoring the contributions students make in terms of their time and lost earnings while devoting themselves to their studies.

Over the past 20 years, the share of Minnesota high school graduates who are POCI students has increased to 30% in 2021–22 (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2020), while the value of the maximum Minnesota State Grant against tuition and living costs has declined. And the share of high school graduates who are POCI students is projected to keep growing for the next 20 years.

### C3 COMMITMENT

The current design of the Minnesota State Grant program is outdated and needs to be modernized to meet the needs of today’s students. We must commit to a new mental model based on CVP/L. The Minnesota State Grant should be founded on students’ economic realities and provide realistic financial support that meets students’ financial needs. In particular, the Minnesota State Grant program is not meeting the needs of Students of Color and American Indian students, and the formula needs an update to create an equitable financial aid system and increase college access and completion for the State to meet workforce needs and the 2025 educational attainment goal. The State of Minnesota needs to prioritize developing and implementing equitable policies that work to increase equality of outcomes with POCI students rather than focusing on equality of college cost reduction regardless of student need and impact on student outcomes.

By significantly lowering the Assigned Student Responsibility of the Minnesota State Grant program by 36%, the Minnesota legislature will address college opportunity, affordability, and student loan debt while efficiently and judiciously using taxpayer dollars to make the most significant positive impact on students, communities and Minnesota’s economy.

To build the most robust financial aid packages possible, Minnesota’s higher education institutions need the partnership of a state grant program based on the reality of what students can afford to pay. Especially now, as students and families have been dealing with increasing costs for everything from rent to gas, to food, with inflation hitting a 40-year high of 9.1% in June 2022 over the previous year and staying high since then (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).

Lowering the Assigned Student Responsibility will increase the opportunity and self-determination of POCI students in Minnesota, increasing higher education access and degree completion, which will, in turn, increase earnings and employment opportunities that align with students’ interests and talents and reduce the debt burden for POCI students.

## Call to Advance

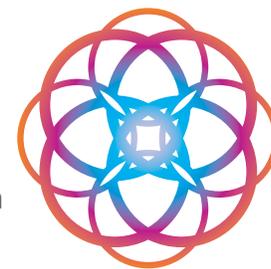
**Based upon the case study**, the Minnesota State Grant program is not aligned with Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) because it does not meet the basic needs of our students. Further investment will help to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in college completion in Minnesota.

### ACTION STEP

**The State must make new investments in the Minnesota State Grant program that are targeted to redress the financial realities of People of Color and Indigenous students while offsetting prior overall disinvestment and the rising costs associated with tuition and living expenses.**



# Conclusion



This report acknowledges the importance of redesigning education opportunities to be centered on Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership. The Minnesota Education Equity Partnership believes it is necessary to shape a public policy agenda that calls for the application of racial justice. This is consistent with the desire for people to live out racial justice in daily life and is critical for Students of Color and American Indian students to achieve their academic goals.

In his recent comprehensive book on using a whole systems vision of education that, “considers the whole child within the context of the ecosystems or communities in which they live.”, Dr. Joe Bishop, the Executive Director of the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools, argues that an effective education experience is possible when it is informed by the full range of realities that students face both inside and outside of conventional schooling and when it is engaged in addressing those realities as a crucial part of instructional practice (Bishop, 2022, p. 18).

**The simple truth is this: racism is real, and directly impacts how students learn, especially People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) students.** This report seeks to lift how that reality shows itself in different aspects of our education system. Applying Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) empowers educators and unleashes the kind of human interaction that leads to racial equity and academic excellence.

Our report looks at school district leadership, student voice, teacher diversity, the needs of adult multilingual learners and targeted investments in higher education to tell a story from a POCI perspective. This story uses the lens of a metaframe called the Clear Solutions Framework (Hillstrom, 2009) for acquiring knowledge and developing skills and then multiplying that knowledge and skill by our will, thereby creating the capacity for change. We also aim to inspire readers to deepen their knowledge, skill and will through a culturally validating relationship with students and others.

Beyond the development of individual abilities, however, the report also points to the engagement in the necessary power of shaping public policy within which these new abilities can have the normed expectation to act and the space to operate. This policy frame would be race equity-focused, unabashedly directing resources to be explicitly targeted where the need for racial justice is greatest, centering student and community voice in local decision-

making, involving educators to share their progress and their learnings openly, incentivizing collaboration across sectors and open to an adaptive redesign of systems for delivering education.

**Currently, Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) is involved in state legislative policy proposals** using this policy frame to advance greater post-secondary access and success, expanding the capacity of school systems to work effectively with emerging multilingual learners, and opening accelerated learning opportunities for students who also are undertaking, “credit recovery,” coursework. Each proposal pushes the boundaries of how we have designed education to the place where racial justice consciousness leads us, as we align design with the unmet aspirations of POCI communities and in countering how a long history of minimized opportunities has been structured into our dominant education systems.

As Dr. Joseph stated, these initiatives are a few ways to fulfill, “a heartened feeling that a new type of justice agenda does exist that bridges issues, ideas, and people in ways that we have never seen before or even imagined until now.” (Bishop, 2022, p. 278). In truth, they have been imagined, and even pursued before — by communities of color and Indigenous communities. Still, they have not occupied the center of our society’s overall public policy frame and actions.

**It is MnEEP’s intent that the imaginations and desires of POCI communities be at the center of all education public policy and practice and that Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) anchor each of us in a collective commitment to transform systems, structures, and shared narratives in racially just ways that lead to liberation and self-determinism.**



## ACTION STEPS

### Leadership

**Based upon the case study findings**, Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) training needs to be a priority to advance race equity and excellence. This points to a need for more consistent, intentional preparation for racially conscious superintendents to lead for educational equity in their districts.

**Require that K–12 district superintendents complete an approved cultural competency leadership training, similar to the teacher requirement as defined in Minnesota Administrative Rule 8710.0310, for a five-year renewal license.**

### Student Voice

**Based upon the case study findings**, the current educational system is based on a system that furthers the racial divide. Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) empowers People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) student voices and brings students into relationships with schools and teachers that promote their human dignity.

**All local school districts across the state must incorporate student-led groups to advise school board policies and instructional practices, and take action on their recommendations for advancing inclusive educational systems in which students' racial and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes.**

### Teacher Diversity

**Based upon the case study findings**, Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) requires a diverse teacher workforce that reflects the student population. To this end, we must elevate the teaching profession and attract more people to become teachers, especially from communities of color and American Indian communities.

**The State must design a coordinated, measurable accountability system and a sustainable policy and investment framework to increase and retain a diverse teacher workforce in Minnesota.**

### Adult Multilingual Learners

**Based upon the case study findings**, the current state of developmental education is not culturally validating. Adult Basic Education programs like College Readiness Academy enable all students to have a fair shot at college access and completion through Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020).

**All higher education institutions must end the use of developmental coursework. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education must assess, report on and fund Adult Basic Education rooted in Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L).**

### Higher Education Investment

**Based upon the case study**, the Minnesota State Grant program is not aligned with Culturally Validating Pedagogy and Leadership (CVP/L) (Hillstrom, 2020) because it does not meet the basic needs of our students. Further investment will help to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in college completion in Minnesota.

**The State must make new investments in the Minnesota State Grant program that are targeted to redress the financial realities of People of Color and Indigenous students while offsetting prior overall disinvestment and the rising costs associated with tuition and living expenses.**

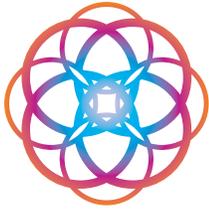
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# Minnesota **Education Equity** Partnership

Advancing **Race Equity** & Excellence

## About MnEEP

MnEEP transforms systems, structures, and public narratives to advance race equity and excellence in education. We envision a racially just society in which each student achieves their full potential.

Led by People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) thought leaders and experts, MnEEP uses a race equity lens to develop and advance networks, practices, research, and policies to dismantle racism in education and build a more just, equitable Minnesota.

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**MnEEP.org**

## We work to make an impact by advancing and transforming:

- Policies
- Practices
- Resource Flows & Research
- Networks, Relationships,  
Connections & Convening
- Power Dynamics
- Mental Models & Narrative Change
- Critical Response