



MN ASSOCIATION OF
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Unleashing education from convention

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

TO: Members of the House Education Policy Committee

RE: Request for Action on Education Issues

The recent tragic death of Mr. George Floyd has set in motion an examination of who we are as a people, what we accept as a society, and how we allow people to be treated. This tragedy has unmasked myths believed, facts ignored and systemic issues that have been hidden in polite conversation but are part of our history and society.

Today, the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools calls on the Minnesota Legislature to begin to address systemic issues that exist in Minnesota public schools.

We call on the Legislature to:

- Recognize that Minnesota's education workforce is not reflective of Minnesota's diverse student population by enacting policy and ongoing financial support for "Grow Your Own" and other programs that provide support and scholarships to increase the number of Teachers of Color in our state.
- Recognize that disparities exist in disciplinary actions utilized to address conduct of different groups of students by enacting non-exclusionary discipline policies in K-12, as well as Pre-school and Pre-K programs, and provide funding for training all teachers to work with young people of different racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.
- Recognize that Minnesota's student population is more diverse and becoming even more diverse than the state's overall population by amending the World's Best Workforce Law to strengthen the law relative to cultural competency goals.
- Recognize the unique history and tormented relationship between public schools and American Indian students by enacting legislation that will strengthen the role of American Indian parents in education and accept American Indian students wearing culturally significant attire and symbols at graduation ceremonies.
- Recognize that it is not the fault of students when school meal payments are in default, by enacting legislation that ensures the dignity of students in school meal programs.
- Recognize that teachers need training to help identify and handle the vastly under-identified social-emotional needs of students, by amending the law to require all licensed teachers to take mental illness training for licensure and licensure renewal.

- Recognize that there are health disparities among students of different racial and ethnic groups including respiratory illnesses, by enacting legislation to include Vaping Education as part of health education.

We believe that these measures would be a small but good start in addressing some of the systemic issues that exist in public education. We look forward to working with you to address these and other systemic issues to promote equitable opportunities and excellence in education for all of Minnesota's public school students.

Eugene Piccolo
Executive Director

Darius Hussain, MACS Board Chair
Director – Face- to-Face Academy

Amy Larsen, MACS Secretary
Executive Director – Blue Sky Academy

Dan De Bruyn, MACS Treasurer
Executive Director – Spectrum High School

Dr. Charvez Russell – MACS Board Member
Executive Director – Friendship Academy of the Arts

John Schroeder – MACS Board Member
Community Member – Retired Education/Evolving Fellow

Bonnie Jorgenson – MACS Board Member
Administrator – Duluth Edison Public Schools

Beth Topoluk – MACS Board Member
Charter School Liaison – Friends of Education

Julie Guy – MACS Board Member
Executive Director – Sojourner Truth Academy

Linda Slocum – MACS Board Member
Community Member – Retired Legislator

Jodi Dansingburg – MACS Board Member
School Coordinator – Ridgeway Community School

Peter Wiczorek – MACS Board Member
Director – Northwest Passage High School