



March 28, 2023

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

The Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition brings together nearly two dozen community, labor, youth and education organizations who are committed to access to Ethnic Studies for all Minnesota students. We are writing in strong support of the Ethnic Studies provisions included within the House Education Finance Omnibus DE.

Ethnic Studies invites students to more deeply explore the many diverse cultures and histories within our state and country, and in doing so gain a better understanding of themselves and their classmates. Studies show that when students' experiences and backgrounds are reflected in their curriculum, they become more engaged in learning, they have a greater sense of belonging, and they achieve better educational outcomes.¹ Ethnic Studies offers students from all backgrounds the knowledge and skills to live and lead in a more diverse, globalized, and interconnected world.

The DE to the House Education Finance bill provides important access to Ethnic Studies for MN students. The bill ensures that all students have the option to take a dedicated Ethnic Studies course in high school. It provides elementary and middle school students with access to Ethnic Studies instruction through its inclusion in academic standards. It creates a diverse working group to provide recommendations to MDE related to standards and instructional resources for school districts. And, it dedicates needed funding to support school districts in developing or strengthening their Ethnic Studies course offerings.

Over 30 school districts across Minnesota currently offer a course categorized as Ethnic Studies.² Two of Minnesota's largest school districts – Minneapolis and St. Paul – recently implemented Ethnic Studies graduation requirements for high school students. These school districts across MN recognize that Ethnic Studies benefits students of all racial and ethnic identities.

Thank you to the Chair for the inclusion of these important Ethnic Studies provisions in the House Education Omnibus bill. We urge continued support for these needed provisions and investments in Ethnic Studies for all Minnesota students.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition

¹ For example, [in a study of three San Francisco high schools](#) over five years, enrolling at-risk ninth grade students in an Ethnic Studies course resulted in a 21 percent increase in attendance and significant increase in student GPAs (by 1.4 points). Graduation rates and college enrollment were also markedly higher than comparable students who did not take Ethnic Studies.

² MDE MN Common Course Catalog

Members of the Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition

Asian American
Organizing Project



CAAL



Climate Generation



Coalition to Increase
Teachers of Color and
American Indian
Teachers in MN



Education for Liberation
Minnesota



Education Evolving



Education Minnesota



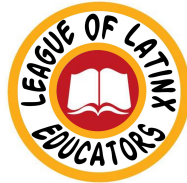
Ed Allies



ISAIAH



League of Latinx
Educators



Minneapolis Federation
of Teachers 59



Minnesota Educators
Against ICE



Minnesota Zej Zog (MN
Zej Zog / MZZ)



Saint Paul Promise
Neighborhood



Unidos MN



Voices for Racial Justice



Youth 4 Ethnic Studies



YoUthROC

