

The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota

www.tocaimn.com info@tocaimn.com



June 14, 2020

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Policy Committee,

Given these historic, troubling times with major racial, health and economic crises that have and will negatively impact most students and educators, there is an even more urgent need to address systemic racial and ethnic inequities in education during this Special Session that have been ignored for too long. As I testified during your early May hearings in support of Chair Youakim's DE amendment to the omnibus education policy bill HF163, the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota strongly endorses HF36.

HF36 includes several crucial policy proposals from the 2019 & 2020 Increase Teachers of Color Act (i.e., Art. 1, Sec. 1, 2, 5; Art. 3, Sec. 1) to help close opportunity and achievement gaps while improving the recruitment and retention of teachers who more closely reflect the rich diversity of students and their families. In 2016 under House Republican leadership, several statutes including World's Best Workforce (120B.11) and Achievement and Integration (124D.861) were amended to ensure that our increasingly diverse students have more "equitable access to effective and diverse teachers." These proposed policy amendments will help the state make good on that commitment and ensure better returns on future state investments.

In addition to your hearings a month ago, these sections were vetted in your committee when hearing the 2020 Increase Teachers of Color Act (HF3201) as well as the 2019 Increase Teachers of Color Act and 2019 House Education Omnibus bill. These provisions included in HF36 were crafted over the past few years by our Coalition with extensive stakeholder feedback consistent with the Governor's vision of "One Minnesota." The Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA) generated a wide variety of endorsements from 50 organizations that often don't agree on other issues for the Increase Teachers of Color Act (see attached bill summary with endorsements). In our politically divided times, we are also grateful this year's ITCA gained strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, with 33% of co-authors (n=6) in the House being Republicans, and 60% of authors in the Senate being Republicans, including Chair Carla Nelson.

In addition to the aforementioned provisions in HF36 adopted from the Increase Teachers of Color Act, the Coalition also strongly supports other important policy proposals to ensure cultural responsiveness of teachers and principals and inclusion of American Indian communities (i.e., Art. 1, Sec. 3, 4; Art. 2, Sec. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 17; Art. 3, Sec. 1, 2). These additional provisions will also help close opportunity and achievement gaps while supporting the retention of teachers of color and American Indian teachers by working with colleagues and in systems that are responsive and respectful of students' racial and ethnic diversity.

Increasingly, we live an interdependent reality. A month ago I wrote to you, “Because the pandemic is making clear the great racial and ethnic disparities that exist in education and the broader society, these provisions are more important than ever during the current crisis, as soon as it ends and for years to come.” Even more now than then, our state needs responses from elected officials to the events since Memorial Day following George Floyd’s killing that are united across racial, political and geographic lines.

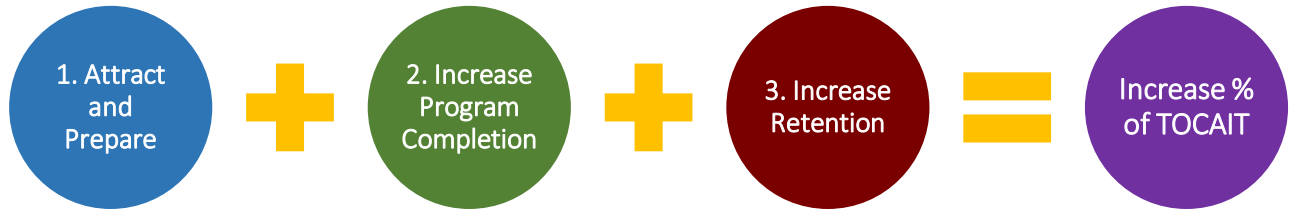
Thank you for your leadership in these historic times,

Paul Spies, PhD
Coalition Legislative Action Team Lead

Increase Teachers of Color Act of 2020

What does ITCA 2020 seek to accomplish?

This package of bills with bi-partisan authorship will create **comprehensive systemic change** needed to **address opportunity and achievement gaps** while **strengthening existing programs for attracting, preparing, and retaining an increased percentage** of teachers of color and American Indian teachers (**TOCAIT**) in Minnesota.



<p>Education E12 Bills HF3201 / SF4166</p> <p>Reps. Kunesh-Podein (D), Koznick (R), Moran (D), Lee(D), Noor (D), Klevorn (D), Youakim (D), Davnie (D), Urdahl (R), Poston (R), Demuth (R), Lillie (D), Moller (D), Jordan (D), Huot (D), Pierson (R), Kresha (R), Mariani (D), Her (D), Hassan (D) with Sens. Abler (R), Nelson (R), Eichorn (R), Torres Ray (D), Hayden (D)</p>	<p>Higher Ed Bills HF4157 / SF4041</p> <p>Reps. Noor (D), Bernardy (D), Kunesh-Podein (D), Nornes (R), Mariani (D), Hassan (D) with Sens. Abler (R), Miller (R), Jensen (R), Clausen (D) and Draheim (R)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes a state goal to increase the percentage of TOCAIT each year so by 2040 all students will have equitable access to effective and diverse teachers (now only 4%) who reflect the diversity of K12 students in the state (34% of all students now are of color or American Indian). Requires an accountability report (Sec. 3, pp. 3-4) • Creates statute to expand and strengthen the Grow Your Own grant program with additional pathways for non-licensed employees, parents and secondary students, and opens eligibility for districts throughout the state. (Sec. 5, pp. 5-9) • Requires district plans under the World’s Best Workforce and Achievement & Integration statutes to ensure curriculum, learning, and work environments are inclusive and respectful of all students, families and employees. The Achievement & Integration program is strengthened to address opportunity and achievement gaps. (Sec. 1 & 2, pp. 1-3, and Sec. 6, pp. 9-11) • Requires the testing company offering licensure exams to provide more supports for any competent and knowledgeable candidate to pass licensure exams including monthly untimed test taking opportunities, waiving testing fees for low income test takers, and providing free full-length practice tests, etc. (Sec. 4, p. 5) • Includes “blank” appropriations for additional, one-time funding (amounts TBD if committee target allows) for three popular grant programs that had FY20 applications requesting 2x the amount of funds available from FY20 base funding: (1) Grow Your Own, (2) Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color, and (3) Teacher Mentorship and Retention, and (Sec. 7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens Student Teacher Candidate Grants in Shortage Areas to address most severe shortage areas in each economic development region and target financial support to candidates accordingly. Amends 2019 session law to clarify that FY21 specified appropriation for TOCAIT candidates is in addition to amount reserved per statute. (Sec. 1, pp. 1-4, Sec. 3 & 4, pp. 8-9) • Strengthens Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness program to address most severe shortage areas by region so limited funds support those teachers and reserves a percentage of funds for TOCAIT equal to the percentage of students of color and American Indian students in MN. (Sec. 2, pp. 4-8)
	<p>Higher Ed Bills HF4088 / SF4165</p> <p>Rep. Noor (D), Hassan (D) with Sens. Abler (R), Clausen (D)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a “blank” appropriation for additional, one-time funding (amount TBD if committee target allows) for student teaching grants for TOCAIT candidates.



State Councils and Organizations Endorsing the 2020 Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA)

(as of March 13, 2020)

- MN Council on Latino Affairs
- MN Indian Affairs Council
- Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans
- Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
- MN Youth Council
- Education Minnesota
- MN School Board Association
- MN Association of School Administrators
- MN Association of Elementary School Principals
- MN Association of Secondary School Principals
- Association of Metropolitan School Districts
- MN Parent Teacher Association
- MN Association Colleges for Teacher Education
- MN Private College Council
- Minnesota State
- MN Association of Charter Schools
- MN Association of Charter School Authorizers
- MN Head Start Association
- Minnesota Montessori Network
- Learning Disabilities Association of MN
- MN Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board
- MN Education Equity Partnership
- Voices for Racial Justice
- Growth & Justice
- Educators for Excellence – Minnesota
- EdAllies
- Education Evolving
- Equity Alliance MN
- NAVIGATE
- MindWorks Collaborative
- Wildflower Schools
- Literacy Minnesota
- Project Legacy
- Zintkala Luta
- Tiwahe Foundation
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- OneMN.org
- Education for Liberation Network—MN Chapter
- SEWA-AIFW
- Mpls Federation of Teachers, Local 59
- St. Paul Promise Neighborhood
- St. Paul Community Literacy Consortium
- Bethel University, Education Dept.
- University of St. Thomas, School of Education
- University of Northwestern – St. Paul School of Education
- Concordia University, St. Paul, College of Education
- University of MN-Twin Cities, College of Education and Human Development
- El Colegio High School
- Strive Publishing

* Attorney General Keith Ellison has also endorsed the 2020 ITCA

