

March 12, 2024

Chair Cheryl Youakim
House Education Finance Committee
State Office Building – Basement Hearing Room

Re: 2024 Increase Teachers of Color Act (HF4500/Clardy)

Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, and Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage are state agencies created by the Minnesota Legislature to advise elected officials about our constituent communities and their needs.

Once again, our three Ethnic Councils and the Indian Affairs Council have come together to make the Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA) our top joint priority in education for the 2024 Minnesota Legislative Session.

Demographic trends suggest that teacher workforce diversification is critical to the short-term and long-term economic vitality of Minnesota and the United States. Research shows that all students benefit from having diverse teachers, and achievement gaps narrow for students of color and American Indian students when their teachers reflect their diverse backgrounds. Workforce diversification also remains the most productive way for Minnesota to address the overall teacher shortage.

The Minnesota Legislature affirmed the preceding when it established in state law ([§120.117](#)) the goal of increasing the percentage of BIPOC teachers by at least two percentage points annually to ensure that Minnesota's teachers more closely reflect the state's increasingly diverse student population by 2040. Our Councils commend this goal, and we are proud of the bipartisan work the Legislature has accomplished previously on the ITCA. However, the state's investments continue to fall short of existing demand for pathways supported by past ITCA legislation. **In order to meet this demand, we recommend making targeted, one-time investments in three critical, underfunded programs:**

- 1. A total of \$10 million for Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarships, combining \$5M from E12 Education and \$5M from Higher Education;**
- 2. \$5 million for Teacher Mentorship and Retention Grants; and**
- 3. \$1 million for Collaborative Urban and Greater Minnesota Educators of Color Grants.**

These investments, while not fully meeting the need or demand for these programs, would bring more teachers into the pipeline without impacting the state's longer-term budget outlook.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment on this issue, and we thank Representative Clardy for her leadership on this bill. **We urge the Committee to support the 2024 Increase Teachers of Color Act and do the right thing for Minnesota's students and schools.**

Respectfully,

Rosa Tock | Executive Director | Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
Sia Her | Executive Director | Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
Linda Sloan | Executive Director | Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
Shannon Geshick | Executive Director | Minnesota Indian Affairs Council