

March 16, 2023

Chair C. Youakim  
House Education Finance—120 Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Youakim and members of the House Education Finance Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council) submits this letter in support of H.F. 1773, offered by Representative Clardy, to index English learner program revenue to the general education basic formula and establish credentials to support English learners.

The Council is charged by the legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota's API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly support the provisions of H.F. 1773.

In Minnesota, there are roughly 76,000 identified English learners—which is about 10% of the state's student population. At the Council, we are all too aware of the disproportionate loss suffered by our most vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, including by English learners and their families. The loss of in-person education and personal interactions with educators caused most learners to progress more slowly, if not to regress. The pandemic shed light on the disparities impacting many of our communities and reinforced the perception that we as a state are falling short of serving all Minnesotans. This is especially true for our English learners.

Educational gaps that already existed in our state have been exacerbated by the pandemic and will take many years to fully understand. However, we must take the opportunity to act now to initiate much-needed support for English learners. This bill will address their critical needs by providing certainty that English learners will have the support they need to succeed in their education, providing an essential foundation for their future success and helping to close the state's achievement gaps. Providing this support is essential to meeting the needs of English learners and, by extension, their families.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill and urge its adoption to provide the resources and support that English learners and families need and deserve to reach their potential and thrive.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris  
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison  
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans