

March 8, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Re: House File 1502/Senate File 1476

Dear Senator Mary Kunesh and Representative Samantha Sencer-Mura,

Minneapolis Public Schools supports House File 1502 and Senate File 1476. As a district that has a Ethnic Studies graduation requirement, we have seen the positive impact on student engagement these classes have provided our students. Students who take an ethnic studies course have expressed improvements in their own personal self-awareness and identity, as well as their ability to explore other diverse ethnic and/or racial identities.

As Minneapolis Public Schools continues with our Curriculum Transformation Project, we look forward to continuing embedding ethnic studies pedagogy and content into our secondary and elementary curriculum. By embedding ethnic studies pedagogy and content into our curriculum, it allows our students to see themselves as a part of a diverse United States of America, and their families' lived experiences through what they are studying. By going deeper into our students' rich cultural histories, students get to experience the challenges and triumphs of those who came before them. MPS students are gaining unique perspectives and understandings of the struggles of those before them, and how to leverage civic and social responsibility, in a way that centers social and racial justice.

While some have described the proposed bills as being divisive, ethnic studies as a discipline fundamentally does the opposite. Our students learn and understand about community, beyond their immediate groups, and they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a broader society. Students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds have embraced these classes, and have been able to engage in discourse that is authentic, meaningful and rigorous. In MPS, all students are seen and heard, building a greater sense of shared community.



Office of the Superintendent
Rochelle Cox, Interim Superintendent
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As Minneapolis Public Schools expands Ethnic Studies pedagogy and content throughout K-12, and increasing community specific offerings of Ethnic Studies courses, we hope that other students across the state also get to have similar experiences. Students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds have expressed improved attitudes towards diversity and an understanding of self.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rochelle Cox', is written in a cursive style.

Rochelle Cox
Interim Superintendent