

10 Reasons Why the 2021 Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA) Needs to Pass

E12 Bills: HF 217 (Hassan) / SF 446 (Abeler) + Higher Ed Bills: HF 1041 (Keeler) / SF 797 (Abeler)

- 1. OUR PERSISTENT GAPS ARE AMONG THE WORST IN THE U.S.** A big reason Minnesota continues to have some of the worst opportunity and achievement gaps in the country is because of the severe and persistent shortage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers (TOCAIT) despite a lot of focus over the past 20+ years on closing these gaps.
- 2. RESEARCH** shows that students from ALL racial and ethnic groups benefit from TOCAIT, and that TOCAIT are more effective at closing achievement gaps.
- 3. SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY BENEFIT** from more TOCAIT as K12 and Higher Education opportunity and achievement gaps close. The lack of TOCAIT is a drain on the economy.
- 4. ROLE MODELS AND REPRESENTATION MATTER.** All students benefit from diverse teachers as role models, and kids learn best when taught by people who best understand their communities and life experiences.
- 5. STUDENTS ARE BEING DENIED EQUITABLE ACCESS.** Several CURRENT MN Statutes assert that: "*All students shall have improved, equitable access to effective and diverse teachers who reflect the diversity of students in schools and districts.*" However, the Legislature has not done nearly enough to since 2017 to provide such access to teachers of color and American Indian teachers (TOCAIT) by not passing previous ITCA's and only funding relatively few and relatively small programs with relatively little money.
- 6. WE'RE IN A VERY DEEP HOLE.** Minnesota has had a huge shortage of TOCAIT for decades and this shortage grows each year our K12 students get more diverse. Currently, TOCAIT represent only 7% of all 75,000 teaching assignments, but 38% of all students are of color or American Indian. **IF students had equitable access to diverse teachers today who reflect the diversity of students, there would be 22,000 TOCAIT in 2020; instead, there are fewer than 3,000 TOCAIT.** (See table on next page for differences between the diversity of students and lack of teacher diversity in various state regions).
- 7. ONLY COMPREHENSIVE, SYSTEMIC CHANGES WILL ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE.** We must pass and fully fund ITCA to "move the needle"; only supporting relatively few and good but small programs has contributed to the severe shortage and it only gives the false impression the problem is being addressed.
- 8. THE TIME IS NOW** for systemic change. Students can't wait any more. Lives and futures are at stake.
- 9. ITCA 2021 RESPONDS TO INCREASED CALLS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE** from people of all racial groups, ages and geographic regions in MN, the U.S. and world in summer of 2020 after police killed George Floyd.
- 10. ITCA HAS BROAD SUPPORT.** The ITCA has had bipartisan support and leadership in the House and Senate since 2017. Each year a wide range of several dozen education and community organizations have united in endorsing ITCA despite being very divided on other issues and legislation, even on other legislation related to or impacting teachers of color. This relative consensus has resulted from extensive stakeholder input on bill drafts. In this time of very divisive politics, good and important things still need to get done.



How Severe is Minnesota’s Shortage of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers?

SOURCE: 2021 Teacher Supply and Demand Report (PELSB)

Table 5: Proportion of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT) Compared to Students of Color and Indigenous Students (SOCIS) by Economic Development Region (EDR)

Region	Description	Total Number of TOCIT	Percent of Total TOCIT within the EDR	Total Number of SOCIS ¹¹	Percent of Total SOCIS within the EDR
1	Northwest	16	1.18%	3,097	22.08%
2	Headwaters	55	4.16%	11,175	76.44%
3	Arrowhead	89	2.24%	11,580	26.16%
4	West Central	45	1.44%	7,988	22.36%
5	North Central	34	1.44%	5,651	21.53%
6E	Southwest Central	16	1.12%	4,666	27.96%
6W	Upper Minnesota Valley	14	1.96%	1,600	21.36%
7E	East Central	51	2.36%	3,953	15.34%
7W	Central	102	1.61%	16,145	19.83%
8	Southwest	31	1.49%	7,270	34.27%
9	South Central	45	1.40%	7,987	22.95%
10	Southeast	113	1.62%	22,232	28.34%
11	7-County Twin Cities	4,886	12.09%	236,325	47.99%
TOTAL		5,497¹²	7.28%	339,669	38.03%

Table 5 compares the proportion of teachers of color and indigenous teachers (TOCIT) with the proportion of students of color and indigenous students (SOCIS) by economic development region. In every economic development region, the percent of teachers of color and indigenous teachers is far lower than that of their student populations. This remains evidence of the need

to revisit policies around recruitment, preparation, and retention specifically addressing populations of color and indigenous populations. Improved data collections tools to dig deeper than the Federal race and ethnicity categories for teachers and students could also provide more alignment with strategies required to bridge this gap.

¹¹ Data from the Minnesota Department of Education

¹² Note: a teacher may be counted in multiple districts and potentially multiple economic development regions.

