



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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To Members of the House and Senate Education Committees:

On behalf of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) Board of Directors, I am writing in support of HF 217, a bill that would strengthen the Increase Teachers of Color Act. I also wish to express our thanks to Rep. Hassan for sponsoring this important legislation. Increasing the number of teachers of color and Indigenous teachers has been a longstanding priority for AMSD member school districts and is one of the top priorities identified on our [2021 Legislative Platform](#).

Diversifying our teacher workforce is also a key component of the [Reimagine Minnesota](#) collective action plan, an initiative of AMSD's superintendents. Reimagine Minnesota was launched by our superintendents in 2016 with the goal of ensuring that each and every student has access to an equitable and excellent education. From January through May of 2017, parents, students, cultural representatives, community members, business leaders and education stakeholders were invited to Reimagine Minnesota and conceptualize how our education system should be re-designed to ensure the success of each and every student.

The input received led to the creation of a collective action plan outlining nine key strategies:

- Develop, sustain and evaluate cultural competence for teachers
- Prioritize and ensure personalized education with an emphasis on acceleration vs. intervention
- Develop and implement culturally inclusive standards, curriculum and a comprehensive system of assessment
- Develop teacher preparation, recruitment and retention for staff of color
- Elevate student voice and leadership and improve/ensure inclusiveness in the school culture and environment
- Eliminate adult behaviors and policies that lead to disproportionality; provide growth-oriented student, staff and family support
- Build bridges between school and community
- Create and sustain consistent shared understanding of equity and high level of skill application for leaders at all levels
- Statewide funding that ensures equity, access and opportunity for all students

It has long been documented that the state is sorely lacking in the number of teachers of color. Research released just last week by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) noted in its [2021 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Report](#) “a staggering lack of teachers of color and indigenous teachers in all corners of the state.”

Specifically, the report notes less than 8 percent of all licensed teachers in the state of Minnesota self-identify as a teacher of color or indigenous. By comparison, more than 38 percent of the state’s students are students of color.

Research shows that diversifying the teacher workforce, increasing cultural competency and developing a culturally inclusive curriculum and school environment is critical to eliminating the opportunity gaps faced by students of color and Indigenous students. AMSD stands ready to work with state policymakers to advance this important legislation and work toward building an education system that ensures each and every student has access to an equitable and excellent education.

Sincerely,

Scott Croonquist
Executive Director
Association of Metropolitan School Districts