



February 7, 2022

Re: English Learner Programming Funding Increase HF 2944

To: Honorable Members of the Legislature,

On behalf of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders, I am writing to express strong support for English Learner Programming Funding Increase legislation introduced this session, HF 2944.

The Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) is a social justice organization based in the Twin Cities, with the majority of our active members living in Minneapolis, St. Paul and the surrounding suburbs. Over 4,000 Asian Minnesotans are part of our growing network of leaders. In Minnesota, Asian students make up 28% of Dual Language Learners, the second largest population after Hispanic students.

Increasing funding for English Learner programming is critical to ensuring the success of our newest Americans. While Minnesota is known for churning out high performing students, in comparison to other states. Minnesota has higher test scores, graduation rates, and overall college readiness indicators. Yet, Minnesota has the highest academic disparity gaps between nonwhite and white students, and between multilingual students of color and English dominant students (particularly white students). Additionally, the pandemic has exacerbated the learning gap in Minnesota, especially for students of color and multilingual students.

We believe that schools know what their student population needs best and they need adequate funding to meet the needs of their students. This legislation would provide an avenue for schools to invest more support and resources into their English Learner programs.

We strongly urge you to support HF 2944. This is an important opportunity to invest in students of color and our underserved communities who bring a diversity of culture and linguist experiences. .

Thank you for your leadership and consideration,

ThaoMee Xiong
Executive Director

Michelle Chang
Lead Organizer for Education Policy