

January 23, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of proposed bill HF345 to ensure schools use an equity-focused framework to improve educational outcomes and accountability efforts in our state's school systems.

At LatinoLEAD, we envision a world where Latinx community members are civically engaged, connected, supported, and seen as a voice of influence statewide. We invest in individual development to strengthen our collective power by helping raise awareness, provide programs and engage our network through community-led action teams.

LatinoLEAD's education equity goals are to elevate Latinx student and community voice and power to build bridges between schools, work with Latinx families and communities to improve school climates and academic outcomes; provide opportunities for educators to build their understanding of race and equity and implement strategies that create culturally responsive and inclusive schools; and engage our network to advocate for policies at the school, local and state level to address systemic barriers to racial equity in Minnesota's education system. For this reason, LatinoLEAD is in full support of the proposed bill HF 345 and believe this is a great step forward to establish equitable school systems in our state.

Our students, families and peers of Black, Brown and Indigenous communities would greatly benefit from a framework that will provide the environment, assets, resources and information that is relevant and responsive to who our students are. The current accountability standards and one-size-fits-all approach are too narrow to appropriately develop and provide the tools that our students and families need and have perpetuated a harmful narrative that our communities are failures, without the onus being placed on the institutions that have perpetuated such harm.

Our students bring incredible wisdom and assets to their educational experience, and this framework allows us to focus on the tools they need to enhance these assets and continue to develop. We believe that community members themselves are essential in realizing these efforts..

With initiatives like HF 345, Black, Brown and Indigenous communities will have a chance to get the tools they need from their respective schools in collaboration. We believe in this reciprocal accountability effort, which is working to ensure our students, families, and communities are part of driving outcomes and holding schools accountable.

We appreciate your continued strong support for Minnesota's students, teachers, and schools.

En comunidad,

Irma Marquez Trapero
Executive Director,
LatinoLEAD