

Saint Paul, January 20, 2023

Honorable Members of the House Education Policy Committee,

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs has an important role as a state agency to advise and inform elected officials about our constituent communities and their needs. Based on our work and listening directly from Latino youth and families concerned about the prevailing educational achievement gaps, I write today in support of H.F. 345 (Rep. Hussein). This bill presents an innovative pilot program to measure performance in high schools to help improve educational outcomes for students of color.

This performance framework considers the incredible wisdom and assets that students of color bring to their educational experience, allowing to focus on the tools they need to enhance these assets that they continue to develop during their formative years in high school. The current narrow structures of accountability and a one-size-fits-all approach have perpetuated a harmful narrative that Latino, Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are failures, without the onus being place on the institutions that have perpetuated such harm. We believe that using other performance measures closely related to the personal and cultural experiences of our students will, among others, a) support teachers to use evidence-based practices; b) dedicate resources and strategies to increase student engagement and graduation, and c) develop a culture of continuous improvement in schools, in line with the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s recommendations around accountability.

This work bill and framework would allow for interested schools to develop practices, prove successful outcomes and being accountable to a meaningful system that is relevant and responsive to whom our students are and how to support their preparation for life upon graduation. Additionally, the wisdom and assets of our students, families, and communities are embedded into the foundation of the accountability measures. Community has been a part of this rigorous process every step of the way and it is understood that the first set of applicable schools will be held accountable by the authorizer to report on their efforts to improve outcomes for all their students.

Based on this promising approach that will help reduce educational disparities, we urge you to support H.F. 345. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rosa Tock, Executive Director