

Jan. 25, 2021

Rep. Hodan Hassan
531 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

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Rep. Hassan:

Minnesota must grapple with an unfortunate reality. Many of our students, families and even educators don't always feel welcome in our public schools.

They don't see themselves reflected in the curriculum and policies. And although the number of students of color is now at about 35 percent, only about 5.6 percent of teachers are people of color or American Indian.

Minnesota needs to make attracting and retaining teachers of color a priority. That's why Education Minnesota proudly joins more than a dozen organizations in supporting the 2021 Increase Teachers of Color Act. It is a comprehensive approach to the changes needed to recruit, license and keep more teachers in the profession.

The overarching goal is for students to have equitable access to effective and diverse teachers of color and American Indian teachers by 2040 and to start building culturally responsive schools not only for our children, but the adults who teach and care for them every day. The Increase Teachers of Color Act does this by:

- Expanding grow-your-own pathway programs for education support professionals who want to become licensed teachers, creating more "Intro to Teaching" concurrent enrollment courses, offering more scholarships and grants and providing hiring and retention bonuses to attract more teachers of color and American Indian teachers.
- Getting rid of the racially biased Minnesota Teacher Licensing Examinations, an unnecessary barrier for some aspiring educators who have already completed their college coursework.
- Creating more mentoring programs, requiring school leaders to build more culturally accurate curriculum and affirming environments to learn and work in and evaluating principals on their leadership skills and practices in these areas to keep more teachers of color and American Indian Teachers in the profession.
- Prohibiting discrimination or discipline for teaching about persons from protected classes.


If we want all students to thrive and succeed, Minnesota must build racially just schools that reflect the diverse students we serve. Closing our state's racial and economic disparities requires investing in what works, and the Increase Teachers of Color Act is an important step toward that goal.

Sincerely,



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President, Education Minnesota

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Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers,
the National Education Association and AFL-CIO. 



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