

March 2, 2023

Chair Steve Cwodzinski
1200 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave S.
St. Paul, MN 55103

Chair Cwodzinski and members of the Senate Education Policy Committee:

We write to share a united message from the three State Ethnic Councils and the Indian Affairs Council in strong support of the bills proposed by PELSB before your committee.

PELSB's data shows one third of teachers who hold a Tier 2 have completed teacher preparation. About 30% of these teachers are teachers of color. The only barrier to them obtaining a Tier 3 license is passing the licensure exams. They have demonstrated evidence of meeting standards through coursework and teaching.

Therefore, we support S.F. 1473, Removing Barrier to Licensure, Sec. 13 & 14, amending 122A.635. These changes to CUGMEC grant administration and reporting are part of more comprehensive amendments to the grant program included in H.F. 320, Sec. 10, Subd. 1 Lines 7.19-7.22:

"An applicant is exempt from the examination requirements if the applicant completed:

- (1) a board-approved teacher preparation program; or
- (2) a state-approved teacher preparation program in another state and passed licensure examinations in that state, if applicable."

We also support S.F. 1777, Teacher Residency Pilot Program, as long as the Increase Teachers of Color Act (S.F. 619 and S.F. 267) is fully funded, including appropriations for Grow Your Own programs that have designated funding for residencies.

As a state, we have yet to take the necessary systemic action to truly achieve improved results and narrow equity gaps, including addressing the persistent shortage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers. If Minnesota students today had equitable access to teachers who reflect students' diversity as several statutes assert that they should, there would be 348,000 BIPOC teachers instead of the 3,840 we have today, according to the most recent data by PELSB.

In this regard, we support S.F. 1641, Changes to Teacher Licensure and Teacher Preparation Programs, Sec. 5 amending 122A.06, subdivision 6, as we recognize the importance of acknowledging the severe and persistent shortage teachers of color and American Indian teachers as a shortage area.

Thank you for your leadership in doing what is right for the success of all students by increasing the percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers so our students and families have improved and more equitable access to teachers who reflect their diversity.

Sincerely,

Shannon Geshick | Executive Director | Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
Rosa Tock | Executive Director | Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
Sia Her | Executive Director | Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
Linda Sloan | Executive Director | Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage