



March 6, 2023

Re: Support for SF1476, Ethnic Studies Requirement Created

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and Members of the Senate Education Policy Committee,

One of Minnesota's greatest assets is our state's rich diversity. And yet, we struggle with persistent opportunity gaps that impact educational outcomes for students from historically underserved communities. It is clear we need to do far more to bolster preK-12 resources and access, while also addressing inclusion to ensure our students of color and Indigenous students feel seen and celebrated in Minnesota schools. As long-time members of the Ethnic Studies Coalition, EdAllies is proud to continue our support for this needed improvement to our state's education offerings.

SF1476 is an important step toward this, ensuring a well-rounded approach to social studies that includes and reflects the diverse experiences of our students. It will ensure that all students receive a holistic education that builds deeper cross-cultural understanding and creates a more accurate picture of our state and nation's social and historical context—a key step to closing the opportunity gap. SF1476 contains a few key elements that will support successful implementation of the policy:

- Expanding social studies standards: The bill weaves ethnic studies into the framework for state social studies requirements, ensuring all students build an understanding of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity that will equip them to succeed in a diversifying nation.
- Intentional engagement with community: The bill ensures that the process for rolling out ethnic studies includes opportunities for student, parent, and community engagement and feedback. By requiring school needs assessments and a statewide working group, the bill establishes strong processes to support effective implementation.
- Ongoing support systems: The bill also includes supports for schools and districts, including model curriculum support, staffing at the Minnesota Department of Education, and coursework development grants. These elements will help the initiative launch successfully.

By expanding ethnic studies, SF1476 will ensure students of color see themselves reflected in their curriculum, supporting their educational success while also expanding understanding among all students of the diverse cultural and historical backgrounds represented in our state. This bill is a critical step in closing educational opportunity gaps and ensuring student success and we thank Sen. Kunesh for her leadership on this bill.

Sincerely,  
Matt Shaver  
Policy Director