

March 31, 2025

Chair Mary Kunesh
Senate Education Finance Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 1150

Re: 2025 Increase Teachers of Color Act (SF3128/Kunesh)

Dear Chair Kunesh and members of the Senate Education Finance Committee,

The Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, and Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage are state agencies created by the Minnesota Legislature to advise elected officials about our constituent communities and their needs.

As you know, the Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA) has been a top priority in education for our councils since the first version of ITCA was proposed in 2017. We appreciate that you have prioritized this key legislation since then, and we are thankful for the strong support the ITCA bills received in the 2023-2024 historic sessions.

Our request this year is to maintain investments needed to meet official state goal (120B.117) of increasing the percentage of BIPOC teachers at least 2 percentage points annually so that by 2040 MN's teachers reflect its students. Another component of our request is that the Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color (CUGMEC) grant is amended to enhance this program's planning stability. Also, a one-time investment for the Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarships and Closing Educational Opportunity gaps grants would be a strategic investment for two important programs. Because of their newness, these programs approved in 2023 don't have FY26-27 base funding agreements.

Over the years, our councils continue to hear the same message across the state: "BIPOC students and families want to see themselves reflected in our school systems by having more teachers of color and American Indian teachers." We understand that these are uncertain times for our students and their families and that the budget cuts at the federal level will have an immense impact in the progress that the state is making to close the racial gaps between students and teachers. These will continue to widen without the additional supports outlined in bill SF3128. Without the funding and policy changes, the risk is that our state's wide opportunity and achievement gaps, that are among the worst in the country, will not close as rapidly as Minnesotans desires. We recognize that K-12 and higher education systems need more general funding, but strategic funding is also needed for systemic change to increase the percentage of BIPOC teachers.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make historic investments in the future of all our students.

Respectfully,

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