

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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Senator Kunesh and Members of the Senate Education Finance Committee,

I am writing to express our support of SF 3128, which seeks to address the shortage of teachers who reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of Minnesota's student population. This continued investment will help meet the state's goal outlined in statute (120B.117) to increase the percentage of BIPOC teachers by 2% annually, ensuring that, by 2040, Minnesota's teacher workforce mirrors the racial and ethnic makeup of its students.

We support the proposed updates to the Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color (CUGMEC) program, which include eliminating the formula used by grant administrators to determine maximum awards each year and instituting a \$5,000 cap per award year per candidate. Additionally, extending the grant period for institutions from two to four years will provide greater stability and allow for better long-term planning in addressing this critical need.

We also strongly support codifying the Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship program, which would allocate \$10 million annually to support 1,000 underrepresented teacher candidates. This program, which builds on the successful pilot from 2021, will provide essential financial support for students pursuing undergraduate or graduate programs to prepare for careers in teaching.

The need for this investment is clear. According to the 2023 Data Summary Report from the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), there are currently 4,391 BIPOC teacher candidates enrolled in teacher preparation programs, representing 19% of all candidates. Of those, at least 1,000 would directly benefit from the proposed scholarship program, helping them successfully complete their studies and enter the teaching profession, better serving Minnesota's diverse student body.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue. I urge you to support SF 3128 and the vital work it will do to ensure that Minnesota's teacher workforce better reflects the students it serves.

Sincerely,
Laura Mogelson, Legislative Liaison
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