

April 2, 2025

Dear Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA). The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) is responsible for licensing 110,000 teachers in Minnesota, establishing the state standards required to be a licensed teacher, and overseeing the state's nearly 700 teacher licensure programs.

One of PELSB's primary goals is to grow, support, and diversify Minnesota's educator workforce. Research has shown that having more teachers of color and Indigenous teachers is extremely beneficial for all students, but especially students of color and Indigenous students. As the number of students of color continues to increase in the state, it is essential that we work together to foster a similar increase in teachers of color. While this goal is a challenging one, ITCA proposes funding programs that would bring us closer to achieving it.

PELSB supports the proposed language changes related to direct funding support for candidates who receive the Collaborative Urban and Greater Minnesota Educator of Color Grant. We have heard from teacher preparation providers that the current language is confusing and makes it difficult to plan out candidate support. This language change will provide clarity and ensure funds are spread across institutions to support teacher candidates of color through stipends and scholarships.

In addition to CUGMEC funding, we support the efforts to sustain direct aid to teacher candidates of color through the Aspiring Minnesota Teachers of Color Scholarship Program. Financial costs continue to be one of the main barriers to entering the teaching profession for aspiring teachers of color, so we applaud these efforts to help recruit and support more teachers of color.

In closing, we would like to reiterate PELSB's support for the Increase Teachers of Color Act and encourage committee members to vote in support of it as well.

Sincerely,



Yelena Bailey, Ph.D.

PELSB, Executive Director



Angela Osuji, Ph.D.

PELSB, Chair