



2018-2019 Legislative Platform

The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota

GOAL: By 2020, double the number of teachers of color and American Indian teachers (TOCAIT) in Minnesota (currently approximately 2,500 or 4.2% of all teachers), and ensure that at least 20% of those in teacher preparation pathways are persons of color or American Indian (approx. 1,600 candidates or 10%).

To address our state's severe shortage of TOCAIT and move the needle above 4% racially diverse teachers in the state, to ensure all students have "equitable access to effective and diverse teachers" per several state statutes, and to meet the state's World's Best Workforce as well as Achievement and Integration goals, both policy changes and increased appropriations are needed for existing and new programs. The following legislation is needed:

Support Expanded Pathways to Teaching

WHY? Fundamentally, Minnesota must dramatically increase the supply of racially diverse teachers.

- **2018**--Amend language for "Grow Your Own" (GYO) programs to (a) ensure existing, effective residency programs continue to receive funding, and (b) expanded options for innovative GYO programs including scholarships for employed, non-licensed teaching assistants and efforts to encourage secondary students who are of color or who are American Indian to be teachers.
- **2018**--Amend concurrent enrollment language to consider school and districts as eligible institutions for grants to partner with post-secondary institution in offering "Intro to Teaching" courses for college credit to high school students.
- **2018**--Create a Teacher Shortage Task Force that develops recommendations, monitors efforts and reports to the legislature.
- **2019**--Appropriate additional funding for the expansion of "Grow Your Own" and Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color programs that recruit and support racially/ethnically diverse secondary students, paraprofessionals and parents into the teaching profession.
- **2019**--Create grant program for districts to offer incentives to attract out-of-state teachers who are TOCAIT.

Ensure All Schools are Inclusive and Respectful of Students, Parents and Educators from Diverse Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds

WHY? Unfortunately, incidents of racial harassment are increasing in schools in recent years, and disrespectful learning/working environments are a significant reason for student disengagement, achievement gaps and racially/ethnically diverse teachers leaving the profession.

- **2018**--Amend World's Best Workforce legislation to include the expectation that all districts have a process to examine, improve and ensure that the curriculum as well as the learning and work environments are inclusive and respectful toward all students, families, and employees of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in ways needed to help close opportunity and achievement gaps while retaining diverse staff who are of color or American Indian.
- **2018**--Amend Achievement and Integration statute for schools to make plans and use funds to (a) engage in examinations of their environments and curriculum and make needed improvements to ensure they are inclusive, respectful and equitable toward all students, families, and employees of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and (b) hire more cultural liaisons to enhance school relationships with students, families and community partners who are of color or American Indian.
- **2019**--Appropriate funds for grant programs for schools to engage in examinations of their environments and curriculum and make needed improvements.
- **2019**--Appropriate funds for programs to hire more cultural liaisons and school leaders who are of color and American Indian.



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v1/11/18



Provide Financial Incentives, Scholarships, Loan Forgiveness and Tax Credits

WHY? Current legislative appropriations only support approximately 190 teacher candidates who are of color or American Indian. However, at least 600 new teachers are needed to increase their percentage just 1%.

- 2019--Appropriate funds to provide 1700 scholarships up to \$5,000 per semester to teacher candidates who are of color and American Indian for a maximum of 2.5 years of full-time study.
- 2019--Expand current Teacher Candidate Program with extra funds to provide 500 TOCAIT with student teaching stipends of \$7,500 to subsidize tuition and cost of living during the full-time, unpaid internship that lasts 12-16 weeks.
- 2019--Increase appropriation and annual eligible amount of Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness program from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per year of licensed service in MN, and from up to five years to up to ten years.
- 2019--Allow TOCAIT and other teachers in shortage areas to receive state income tax credits equal to the amount of interest they pay on education loans.



Eliminate Discriminatory Teacher Testing

WHY? Licensure reform in 2017 required that passing discriminatory teacher skills tests were still needed to earn a Tier 4 license even after teaching effectively for at least three years on a Tier 3 license (although both can receive unlimited renewals). Amendments are needed to make Tier 4 licensure based on proven performance rather than discriminatory standardized tests of reading, writing and math that are not correlated with teaching effectiveness. Further, the skills tests were not designed for assessing already proven effective teachers.

- **2018**--Amend licensure requirements so that teachers who have demonstrated reading, writing and math skills under a Tier 3 license can be recommended for a Tier 4 license by their district/school without needing to pass skills exams..



Provide Support to Retain Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT)

WHY? Effective TOCAIT leave the profession at higher percentages than their white colleagues so greater induction and retention support targeted towards TOCAIT are needed.

- **2018**--Amend Teacher Mentorship statute (122A.70) to include a focus on retention and allow existing funding and future grant programs to be used for:
 - teacher induction residency programs and other professional development programs to help retain teachers of color and American Indian teachers with paid mentors.
 - micro-grants to support TOCAIT to form affinity group professional learning communities to support each other and counter the isolation experienced while working in predominantly white workplaces.
- **2018**--Amend Teacher Mentorship statute (122A.70) so that schools or districts may negotiate additional protection from layoffs in the beginning years of employment for teachers of color and who are American Indian and provide financial incentives for teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian to work for at least five years.
- **2018**--Amend World's Best Workforce statute to ensure school work environments are inclusive and respectful of diversity.
- 2019--Appropriate money for expanded Teacher Mentorship and Retention grant program (122A.70) to fund grant programs to help (a) teachers of color and American Indian teachers form and sustain affinity group professional learning communities for peer support and to counter the isolation experienced while working in predominantly white workplaces; and (b) retain and ensure the success of TOCAIT, including paid mentors or instructional coaches.

