



Vision: Every student benefits from diverse and excellent educators.

Greetings,

The past few months have been full, meeting with many stakeholders and learning about how various organizations or groups lead efforts to increase, diversify, and support the educator workforce in Minnesota, which is the priority of our team as well. It is important to acknowledge that dozens of groups and thousands of individuals have been active in this space for many years. We are simply excited to be among you in this work.

You are receiving this message because you have expressed interest in staying informed about diversifying the educator workforce and ensuring all students have equitable access to great teachers or you have participated in similar efforts in the past at MDE. In these initial newsletters, our intent is to communicate information, to provide updates related to specific state activities, and to share resources.

Please forward this message among your networks as you see fit. To have your name added to our distribution list, please contact mde.schoolsupport@state.mn.us.

Tyler Livingston and Angela Mansfield

General Information

Background

Educational research is clear that the most important school-based factor on student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher (followed closely by the effectiveness of the school principal). Research also tells us that all students benefit from a racially diverse teaching workforce, and that students of color and American Indian students benefit even more.

In Minnesota, only 4 percent of our teacher workforce identify as a teacher of color or American Indian teacher (TOCAIT) whereas 34 percent of our students identify as students of color or American Indian students (SOCAIS). The rate of TOCAIT has not changed much in the last 20 years, while the percentage of SOCAIS has and will continue to climb.

We are also facing a shortage of teachers that show up in various geographic regions as well as grade levels and subject areas. Teachers are also leaving the workforce for a variety of reasons and fewer candidates are exploring and becoming teachers, which is a contributing factor to the shortage.

State and national data also shows that low income students, students of color, and American Indian students are more likely to be taught by teachers who are less experienced, working out of their licensure field, or are considered “ineffective” than their peers. These facts illustrate a systemic inequity in access to diverse and excellent teachers.

Given our the current lack of access to effective and diverse teachers, our shared task is to recognize the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented this access and to eliminate those structural and institutional barriers to effective and diverse teachers so that children have equitable educational experiences.

State Action

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Office of Higher Education (OHE), and the Professional Educator Licensure and Standards Board (PELSB) are collaborating to create a stakeholder-driven process to identify state strategies to ensure equitable access to diverse and effective teachers. This “State Equitable Access Plan” will involve a stakeholder group(s) that will meet in the next six months and will result in a plan (e.g., strategies, action steps, success measures, etc) as well as a commitment to annually report on our progress both with the plan itself as well as our outcome measures of increased equitable access to diverse and effective teachers.

Updates

- Since our initial outreach in April, we have met with 29 organizations to build relationships and to learn more about one another’s efforts. We seek to create inclusive and representative spaces in this effort, particularly for those marginalized by inequitable access. In general, we have reached out to:
 - Professional organizations and practitioners
 - State racial and ethnic councils
 - Advocacy groups and service providers

As we work together, we anticipate all of the above will work to include families, students and communities in forthcoming conversations about equitable access.

- MDE and PELSB also met recently with leaders from the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota. As many recipients of this newsletter know, their Increase Teachers of Color Act represents bold and robust policy and funding shifts designed to “move the needle” increasing our statewide percent of TOCAIT. While most of the legislative package did not pass in 2019, the Coalition, MDE and PELSB are committed to improving the implementation of the policies that did pass and to keep the conversation moving forward. One example of this effort is in the following bullet.
- MDE/ OHE/PELSB each manage state funds/grants that can be utilized to diversify the teacher workforce. While each agency operates independently, we are currently exploring what it would take to have shared communications, common reporting goals, and improved use of the grant programs. Also,

how might we better partner with communities throughout the grants process? Our shared priorities include being able to transparently report to Minnesotans that their investments in these programs are removing barriers for TOCAIT and, ultimately, are leading to additional TOCAIT serving Minnesota students.

Coming Soon...Workgroup Invitation

- MDE/OHE/PELSB will be inviting you to participate in a public workgroup that will meet regularly to update Minnesota's plan to ensure equitable access to diverse and excellent teachers. Meeting dates are to be determined; an invitation will be communicated using this same e-mail list soon. Participants can expect kickoff meeting that will lay out the context of the work, the goals and deliverables of the workgroup, as well as other opportunities outside of a workgroup commitment to participate.

Resources

Minnesota did author a state equitable access plan in 2015 which outlined seven strategies to ensure that all Minnesota students have access to excellent educators. We recommend reading the Frequently Asked Questions ([FAQ](#)) as a short summary of the 2015 plan.

The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) publishes a Teacher Supply and Demand report every two years. The most recent version is available [on their webpage](#).

[A Vision and Guidance for a Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Workforce](#) by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Though written for state and district leaders, this resource is approachable for a variety of audiences. It sets a strong tone for why this initiative is important and what educational leaders might do. Recommended reading!

[Equitable Resource Distribution](#) by MDE. This document is designed to help districts and charters examine how resources (people, time, and money) can be used equitably in their education systems. Readings, tools, and process suggestions for equitable access to effective teachers and for equitable resource distribution are included.

MDE/OHE/PELSB will also be publishing a resource that provides a high level overview of all the funded programs that could be utilized locally to diversify the educator workforce. This would reference various grants that each agency manage as well as state or federal programs like Minnesota's Achievement and Integration program. Currently, this resource is in an incubator stage, but our hope is to publish an early draft of this before the August 6-7 back to school conference.