

Quotes from Prepared Remarks of Speakers at February 25 Bipartisan Press Conference about the Increase Teachers of Color Act

“While there are 7 white students for every white teacher in the state, there are 14 American Indian students for each American Indian teacher, and there only 1,084 American Indian teachers in Minnesota.”

--Shannon Geshick, Executive Director
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

“While there are 7 white students for every white teacher in the state, there are 58 Latinx students for each Latinx teacher, and there are only 1,521 Latinx teachers in the state.”

--Rosa Tock, Executive Director,
Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

“While there are 7 white students for every white teacher in the state, there are 51 Asian Pacific Islander students for each of the 1,224 API teachers in the state.”

-- Andy Morris, Public Affairs and Legislative Liaison,
Minnesota Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

“While there are 7 white students for every white teacher in the state, there are 65 Black students for each Black teacher, and there are only 1,561 total Black teachers in Minnesota.”

“The Councils, our communities and the Coalition have a sense of urgency on this issue, as our students’ learning continues to be impeded by structural and systemic challenges that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic.”

--Linda Sloan, Executive Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

“Growing up with brown skin in a society where everything revolves around whiteness, even your education, is damaging, confusing and traumatizing.”

--Yahanna Mackbee, Student
Washburn High School, Minneapolis

“At school I know I don't belong. How could I belong when my ancestors' existence in history books is short and brief. When my peers are surprised at how eloquently I speak.... When having darker skin makes you both invisible and a target at the same time in a space full of white students. When you're expected to fail so don't even try. When they assume your capability is lower and theirs higher. When your humanity is questioned.” --Yahanna Mackbee

“For white students, “learning alongside teachers and students of color helps normalize multiple perspectives by producing opportunities to question assumptions about race, class and privilege - thus, counterbalancing dangerous stereotypes, alternative facts, and destructive narratives.”

--Jessica Davis, 2019 MN Teacher of the Year

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“Our kids are consuming the actions taking place in front of them at our buildings of government, and listening to the words of our leaders and elected officials. It is on us to remain mindful that how we model our priorities now determines whether these students grow up to scale the walls of our capitol building or give truth to power through poetry inside of it.”

--Jessica Davis, 2019 MN Teacher of the Year

“Year after year, Minnesota’s students are being denied the opportunity to learn from teachers of color. Think about the effect this has on both our students of color and our white students...never having the opportunity to be taught by someone of color.”

--Regina Seabrook, Core Steering Committee Tri-Chair,
Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in MN

“IF students had equitable access to diverse teachers today who reflect the rich diversity of students, there would be 22,000 full-time equivalent teachers of color and American Indian teachers. Instead, Minnesota has fewer than 3,000 full-time teachers. Instead, there are fewer than 3,000 of such diverse, full time teachers.” --Regina Seabrook

“The time is now for systemic change. Students can’t wait any more. Lives and futures are at stake.”

--Regina Seabrook

“In my roles as a teacher and administrator for over 15 years I have experienced not only the benefits I bring to my students, but also the trauma of being a teacher of color.”

--Sandy Saucedo-Falagan, Core Steering Committee Tri-Chair,
Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in MN

“Our state’s funding approach over the years is the equivalent of a farmer trying to irrigate hundreds of acres of crops with a garden hose and expecting all the crops to grow.”

“We remind lawmakers and the public that the investments we seek that are needed to start increasing the percentage of teachers of color is just two-tenths of one percent of total Education spending and just one percent of the total higher education budget.”

--Sandy Saucedo-Falagan