

Education Minnesota Affirmative Involvement Plan (AIP)

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**THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS**

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Purpose

In 1998, the Minnesota Education Association (MEA) and the Minnesota Federation of Teachers (MFT) merged to create the union known today as Education Minnesota. Seven years prior to the merger, in 1991, the MEA crafted its first affirmative involvement plan, (AIP); the AIP's intent is to provide an outline of what members need from their union. This living document undergoes a series of edits and revisions by the Education Minnesota Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC), and then goes to the Governing Board for final approval. Education Minnesota staff use this document as a roadmap to guide their work.

Rationale

Members of color feel racially isolated and disconnected, so creating spaces to network and have conversations will ensure that members feel more involved and care about their union. Members of color, particularly in greater Minnesota, report feeling culturally isolated at school. Many members report that because of their race and a lack of a supportive network, there is a need to work twice as hard as their white counterparts to be successful as new educators. In addition to ethnic-specific forums, local organizations provide a natural space for getting acquainted, meeting, and organizing around common issues and interests.

Education Minnesota needs the participation and partnership of locals to engage their members of color and Indigenous members to get accurate data for members who are engaged and to directly reach out to members to invite them to become leaders within our union. Locals have more direct access to members and member lists and are a vital component to creating an inclusive community.

Similarly, the work of interrupting racism by becoming anti-racist should not fall solely on the shoulders of members of color. It is the responsibility of white members and leaders to work with each other to do the work in and for their own community. Only white people can fully stop white supremacy.

Corporate education reform organizations have full-time organizers in MN. These organizations have signed up hundreds of our members by tapping into our members' frustration with the lack of equity in public schools.

While recruitment of students and teachers of color is crucial, the climate under which students and teachers of color live and work leads to cultural taxation. This cultural taxation/ hidden labor needs to be named and recognized by institutions. The mental health of students of color, especially those in higher education needs urgent action.

We need the best leaders in education to have the best schools. Many leadership opportunities within our union are not widely known about due to the increased pressures of the day-to-day classroom expectations. Mentorship would provide new leaders with the right information and encourage a culture of collaboration and openness. Mentorship programs are an excellent way to engage our members of color to become active leaders in their local organizations. It promotes excellence by providing support and guidance, one-to-one training, encouragement, and knowledge to navigate a system that can be confusing and daunting without the correct information.

The celebration and acknowledgement of excellent educators of color for their work strengthen the support of current educators of color and Indigenous already in the profession allow for growth and opportunity across the breadth of experience of educators of color and other marginalized groups.

Developing intentionally pathways for BIPOC and other marginalized members to promote excellence by providing support and guidance, one-to-one training, encouragement, and knowledge to navigate a system that can be confusing and daunting without the correct information.

Many leadership opportunities within our union are not widely known about due to the increased pressures of the day-to-day classroom expectations. These pathways will be a catalyst for the acknowledgement for excellent educators of color to be on a platform to share their work will strengthen the support of current educators of color and Indigenous

members; and lead to recruitment and retention of BIPOC people to become educators by highlighting those members already in the profession.

Equity as a recognized organizational priority; staff members need to assess their current ways of interacting with members of color and Indigenous members. Becoming a leader in the promotion of education equity; Education Minnesota staff needs to be equipped to articulate the need for racial equity to members and the public and be able to organize around the issue. Our self-interest in education equity needs to be defined and articulated to staff and the members.

Publications should represent all members and include racially diverse leaders to show we value all our members and that all our members have a place in our union. Inclusive language is necessary in all publications to create a community of respect that recognizes and appreciates the rich diversity of our members across the state. Intercultural competence is necessary for all educators and staff to create inclusive spaces where all members and staff feel validated, supported, and respected.

Our efforts and partnerships must be powerful, public and offer meaningful ways for parents and communities of color to work with educators to address racism and racial disparities. We need to build on our existing relationships with community partners to create more buy-in from staff and leaders.

Partnership and support of full-service community schools make a difference in the lives of children, families, educators, and their communities by moving beyond the normal confines of the school and partnering with local stakeholders.

Community schools provide real solutions to the unique problems of the students and families they serve and are another major step forward in reclaiming the promise of public education.

Community schools are places where teachers, families, community members, and service providers come together in partnership that meet the community's needs creating better conditions for both teaching and learning and become the centers of their communities. Community schools become a genuine partnership with everyone in the community and promote stable, healthy neighborhoods, providing support and services for students and their families.

Education Minnesota, its staff, officers, and stakeholders are committed to the 3.1.g. by-law of the NEA to ensure that we are transformative and in step with the changing demographics of the state, our schools, and our communities to continue thriving with our rich diversity. According to Education Minnesota's website, "One of the core purposes of the 'Believe in 'We'" campaign is to emphasize how our members and the Minnesota public share the same values for our students—fairness, freedom, opportunity, equity, inclusiveness, excellence—and that we must all speak up for these values. 'Believe in 'We'" also will help us express the value of belonging to Education Minnesota and the power we have when we speak with a united voice.

Bylaw 3-1(g)

The NEA 3-1(g) bylaw establishes the goal that each state's delegation to the Representative Assembly should be at least equal to the proportion of identified ethnic-minority populations within the state. Bylaw 3-1(g) emphasizes the important process of including members in NEA and state affiliate programs. The bylaw is a reminder of the merger of the American Teachers Association (ATA), and the NEA in 1966. The ATA was founded in 1904 to "connect and encourage Black teachers working to lift the lives of students who were surrounded by systems of inequity." (History of The American Teachers Association by Thelma D. Perry. Forward by Becky Pringle.)

Education Minnesota's State Data Set for 2022

Overall percentages who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Multiracial

Group	Percent
State Population	24%
State/Local Delegates, 2022 RA, Chicago and Virtual	27%
▪ State/Local Delegates, 2021 RA, Virtual	28%
▪ State/Local Delegates, 2020 RA, Virtual	28%
▪ State Active Members/ Race and Ethnicity Known	6.7%
State Active Members/ Race and Ethnicity Known and Unknown	5.4%
Overall Active Members with Race and Ethnicity Unknown	18.7%
▪ Local Association Presidents/ Race and Ethnicity Known	1.1%
▪ Local Association Presidents/ Race and Ethnicity Unknown	1%
▪ State Board of Directors	?
▪ State Delegate Assembly	?
State Workforce: Teachers	5.6%
State Workforce: ESPs	16.7%
Public elementary and secondary school students	36.3%

Sources:

- State population, 2020 U.S. Decennial Census.
- State Association membership, NEA Membership Database, August 2022.
- Local Association presidents, NEA Membership Database, August 2022.
- Public School Teacher data, Nation Center for Education Statistics, 2018
- Public School ESP data, NEA ESP Data Book: A Work Force Profile of Education Support Professionals, December 2021, Total ESL workforce by state for the year 2019, at page 148.
- Public school student data, Nation Center for Education Statistics, Fall 2020.

AIP Goals

This is a living document that contains six main goals with tactics. The Member Engagement, Member Retention, and Leadership Development Goals contain sub goals to clarify and organize the work.

Member Engagement

Goal: Elevate underrepresented educators by establishing access to opportunities and maintaining opportunities related to equity and union leadership and voice across our Education Minnesota constituency.

Relational Organizing

- **Tactic 1.** One-to-one conversations and small group discussions with members of color and Indigenous members as well as local, state, and national leaders around accountability for interrupting all systems and policies, etc. that disrupt and dismantle all disparities, inequities, racism, gatekeeping, becoming anti-racist, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.
- **Tactic 2.** Actively engage underrepresented educators (members of color and Indigenous members) in Greater Minnesota to gauge their interests and needs (efforts should include the Education Issues Specialist, Racial Equity Organizer, and appropriate REA's)
- **Tactic 3.** Develop BIPOC aspiring educators mentoring program to build coalitions with high school students in areas with high underrepresented populations.
- **Tactic 4.** Engage aspiring educators to ensure they are listened to, understand, develop, and implement plans that support their future involvement in the union.

Events

- **Tactic 5.** Host multiple events throughout the year to include a start of the year event for members of underrepresented communities.
- **Tactic 6.** Convene an annual meeting with the leaders of each of the ethnic forums in partnership with EMAC meeting to develop the issue-based campaign for BIPOC members.

Affinity Work

- **Tactic 7.** Train members and leaders to lead and gather information using culturally relevant language and methods from underrepresented individuals in their own locals and use it to bargain and meet the diverse needs of BIPOC members.
- **Tactic 8.** Establish and ground member of color and Indigenous members affinity work (Ethnic Forums) in local organizations and state.

Unionism

- **Tactic 9.** Support issue-based campaigns which affirm, share issues of underrepresented individuals at the locals. e.g., Elections (like Education Support Professionals that identify by one or more of the underrepresented and/or intersectionality definitions
- **Tactic 10.** Continue local campaigns to include member driven opportunities that can be brought forward to the Representative Convention (RC); introduce to the AFT and NEA National Convention.

Member Retention

Goal: Implement strategies that increase support, engagement, and retention of individuals that are placed into membership and leadership positions.

Education Minnesota needs to evaluate the racial impact of its policy advocacy, issues, campaigns and communications on members, students, and the public education system.

- **Tactic 1.** Support Ethnic and LGBTQ+ Forums through leadership development, expanded opportunities to be involved in the union and provide representation on all Education Minnesota committees including EMAC, but not limited to.
- **Tactic 2.** Provide a more in-depth plan focused plan for retention of BIPOC members while providing support for all member groups—ESPs, Tier 1, Early childhood teachers and staff with a shared vision of unionism for BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized groups.

Transparency

Design and implement methods for tracking and communicating the accomplishments of EDMN with regards to equity programs and initiatives.

- **Tactic 1.** Director of DEI will create an annual report summarizing and properly disseminated to members about the progress that has been made within racial equity work, including local and organizational levels.
- **Tactic 2.** Create a process where members of color are informed of local or national events with enough time to apply to attend.
- **Tactic 3.** Direct quarterly meetings or communication between the Racial Equity Organizer, EMAC Chair, Education Issues Specialist, and EM officers
- **Tactic 4.** Have a discussion with local leaders to discuss the AIP goals, its status and solicit feedback (annually) on how the local leaders are supporting and the initiatives taken to achieve the AIP goals.
- **Tactic 5.** Implement Equity Assessments at the organizational and local levels.

Leadership Development

Goal: Provide financial support and family resources, intentional, measurable opportunities for leadership development, outreach, and advancement; serving to strengthen EDMN equity goals.

Mentoring

- **Tactic 1.** Establish a mentoring program and leadership program for underrepresented members (race, and Indigenous members) and positions of Tier 1-3 that need content.
- **Tactic 2.** Provide peer mentoring and support that is content specific.
- **Tactic 3.** Provide opportunities, support, and pathways for all underrepresented members for leadership development at all levels, (local, state, national).

Acknowledgement

- **Tactic 4.** Provide training for field staff and locally elected leaders (presidents, treasurers, etc.) on how to engage, uplift, equitably mentor and help underrepresented members (race, and Indigenous members become active leaders in their local organizations.
- **Tactic 5.** Ensure all methods of nominations are designed to create opportunities and are set up to recognize educators who have accomplished excellence by achieving the AIP Goals using and encouraging nominations for state and national awards.

Training

- **Tactic 6.** Provide additional development and training opportunities for leaders of color.
- **Tactic 7.** Provide opportunities, support, and pathways for all underrepresented members of color and Indigenous members to attend leadership conferences and events locally and nationally, e.g., scholarships.
- **Tactic 8.** Develop a streamlined and transparent process of choice, communication, record-keeping, and data collection so members of color and Indigenous members, Officers, and staff can meet the leadership development needs of members of color and Indigenous members.
- **Tactic 9.** Have a report run and shared with EMAC about who is underrepresented, and who is also serving on committees to be used to ensure AIP goals.

Unionism

- **Tactic 10.** Encourage members to join AFT and NEA Specific Caucuses (e.g., Ethnic, LGBTQ+) that support this goal and participate in meetings and events at the local, state, and national levels.
- **Tactic 11.** Encourage, train, and support members of color and all underrepresented members to run for delegate seats and other elected positions.
- **Tactic 12.** Encourage, train, and support members of color and all underrepresented members to run for elected office locally and statewide.
- **Tactic 13.** Address and resolve gatekeeping and any other barriers that jeopardize the successful achievement of this goal and
- **Tactic 12.** Address and ensure accountability when locals are not achieving, supporting, or participating in equity work.

Internal Education

Goal: Visibly increase equity pursuits that are inclusive in language, action, and scope.

- **Tactic 1.** Anti-racism and racial equity training for the Governing Board and local leaders (internal)
- **Tactic 2.** Anti-racism and racial equity training for Education Minnesota staff (external)
- **Tactic 3.** Develop and educate around a “race rubric” (race equity lens?) for each Education Minnesota department to use to assess the department’s racial equity in regard to members as an accountability and transparency piece.
- **Tactic 4.** Help the Governing Board, Education Minnesota staff, and local leaders understand the history and context of deep culture of Minnesota, the Midwest, and the United States in general.
- **Tactic 5.** Actively educate local leaders about equity barriers to recruitment and retention; staff should try to have critical conversations around this topic with districts.
- **Tactic 6.** Create a cultural shift by recognizing that teaching conditions and learning conditions that affect all educators and students also affect all educators and students of color.
- **Tactic 7.** Require all sponsored conferences, professional development to ensure the ED MN process review of the content is followed to ensure cultural relevant and responsive, not traumatic or jarring and demonstrate inclusiveness in presenters, materials, and content.
- **Tactic 8.** Reflect diversity in organizational publications (list how)
- **Tactic 9.** Provide training that enables members and leaders to understand how to best support members of color who also identify as LGBTQ+ members and leaders.
- **Tactic 10.** Complete a process that ensures all facilitators and presenters can demonstrate cultural competence and agility.
- **Tactic 11.** Develop equity focused policy solutions and messaging that reframes race and the education debate.

External Partnerships

Goal: Actively partner with organizations that support programs and efforts to fight poverty and racial disparity, economic justice, and gender.

- **Tactic 1.** Build and maintain cooperative relationships with community organizations.
- **Tactic 2.** Countering corporate reform by building and maintaining organizations to support and strengthen public education including campaigns and political organizers throughout the state.
- **Tactic 3.** Build and maintain relationships with local colleges and Universities to develop mentorship programs with aspiring teachers of color.
- **Tactic 4.** Ensure ALL pre-service teachers complete courses in racial equity and cross-cultural curriculum development
- **Tactic 5.** Ensure educators-in-training have diversity and cross-cultural courses.
- **Tactic 6.** Partner with local community organizers to support Restorative Practice training for Education Minnesota members.
- **Tactic 7.** Community engagement with parents and organizations working to eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline and racial disparities in suspensions and discipline.
- **Tactic 8.** Invite staff and members from partners who have been fighting poverty and/or racism to speak at staff meetings and governance meetings.
- **Tactic 9.** Run external organizing campaigns to promote meaningful ways to address racial disparities in public education.
- **Tactic 10.** Full-service community schools' policy and organizing campaign.
- **Tactic 11.** Research effective teachers of color preparation programs, and ways to recruit and retain teachers of color from other states to teach in Minnesota.
- **Tactic 12.** Create a support system that enables members to reach out to schools that have those who have individuals who are othering in the majority to provide support, resources and content to elevate the learning, (e.g., 99% Hmong)
- **Tactic 13.** Create and implement clear pathways and programs that support this goal, e.g., HBCU.
- **Tactic 14.** Stay informed and avoid programs that indentured servitude and union busting efforts.
- **Tactic 15.** Reengage members that have left the profession, to return them as members (make sure EMAC has access to and uses exit interview data) to do this.
- **Tactic 16.** Develop intentional programs for targeted recruitment into education as a profession for BIPOC and marginalized community members.

Transparency

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- **Tactic 2.** Create a process where members of color are informed of local or national events with enough time to apply to attend.
- **Tactic 3.** Direct quarterly meetings or communication between the Racial Equity Organizer, EMAC Chair, Education Issues Specialist, and EM officers.
- **Tactic 4.** Have a discussion with the local leaders to discuss the AIP goals, providing status and solicit feedback (annually) on how the local leaders are supporting and the initiatives taken to achieve the AIP goals.
- **Tactic 5.** Implement Equity Assessments at the organizational and local levels.
- **Tactic 6.** It is much easier to see progress and the work that needs to be done if EMAC is on the same page as staff when it comes to racial equity work. Creating an annual document highlighting what was done during that year regarding racial equity, along with developing a process for members of color to use to apply to attend events, would improve transparency.

Resources

- Education Minnesota Staff
- NEA Racial and Social Justice department
- Education Minnesota Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC)
- Common Sense Consulting



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*Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers,
the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.*

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