

A bill for an act

relating to education; providing for a plan to reduce the achievement gap.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS'**
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

Subdivision 1. District academic achievement plan; priorities. (a) A school district experiencing disparities in academic achievement is encouraged to develop a short- and long-term plan encompassing one through four years to significantly improve students' academic achievement that uses concrete measures to eliminate differences in academic performance among groups of students defined by race, ethnicity, and income.

The plan must:

(1) reflect a research-based understanding of high-performing educational systems and best educational practices;

(2) include innovative and practical strategies and programs, whether existing or new, that supplement district initiatives to increase students' academic achievement under state and federal educational accountability requirements; and

(3) contain valid and reliable measures of student achievement that the district uses to demonstrate the efficacy of the district plan to the education commissioner.

(b) A district must address the elements under section 2, paragraph (a), to the extent those elements are implicated in the district's plan.

(c) A district must identify in its plan the strategies and programs the district has implemented and found effective in improving students' academic achievement.

(d) The district must include with the plan the amount of expenditures necessary to implement the plan. The district must indicate how current resources are used to

implement the plan, including, but not limited to, state-limited English proficiency aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.65; integration revenue under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.86; early childhood family education revenue under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.135; school readiness aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.16; basic skills revenue under Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.10, subdivision 4; extended time revenue under Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.10, subdivision 2a; and alternative compensation revenue under Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.415.

Subd. 2. **Plan.** (a) A school district by October 1, 2008, must submit its plan in electronic format to the commissioner, consistent with subdivision 1.

(b) The commissioner must analyze the commonalities and differences of the district plans and the effective strategies and programs districts have implemented to improve students' academic achievement, and submit the analysis and underlying data to the advisory task force on improving students' academic achievement under section 2 by November 1, 2008, and also report the substance of the analysis to the education policy and finance committees of the legislature by January 1, 2009.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 2. ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

(a) An advisory task force on improving students' academic achievement is established to review the plans submitted to the education commissioner under section 1 and recommend to the education committees of the legislature a proposal for improving students' academic achievement and eliminating differences in academic performance among groups of students defined by race, ethnicity, and income. The task force members must at least consider how the following education-related issues impact the educational achievement of low-income students and students of color:

(1) rigorous preparation and coursework and how to (i) effectively invest in early childhood and parent education, (ii) increase academic rigor and high expectations on elementary and secondary students in schools serving a majority of low-income students and students of color, and (iii) provide parents, educators, and community members with meaningful opportunities to collaborate in educating students in schools serving a majority of low-income students and students of color;

(2) professional development for educators and how to (i) provide stronger financial and professional incentives to attract and retain experienced, bilingual, and culturally competent teachers and administrators in schools serving a majority of low-income students and students of color, (ii) recruit and retain teachers of color, and (iii) develop and

include cultural sensitivity and interpersonal and pedagogical skills training that teachers need for effective intercultural teaching;

(3) English language learners and how to (i) use well-designed tests, curricula, and English as a second language programs and services as diagnostic tools to develop effective student interventions, (ii) monitor students' language capabilities, (iii) provide academic instruction in English that supports students' learning and is appropriate for students' level of language proficiency, and (iv) incorporate the perspectives and contributions of ethnic and racial groups, consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.022, subdivision 1, paragraph (b);

(4) special education and how to (i) incorporate linguistic and cultural sensitivity into special education diagnosis and referral, (ii) increase the frequency and quality of prereferral interventions, and (iii) decrease the number of minority and nonnative English-speaking students inappropriately placed in special education;

(5) GRAD tests and how to (i) incorporate linguistic and cultural sensitivity into the reading and math GRAD tests and (ii) develop interventions to meet students' learning needs; and

(6) valid and reliable data and how to use data on student on-time graduation rates, student dropout rates, documented disciplinary actions, and completed and rigorous course work indicators to determine how well-prepared low-income students and students of color are for postsecondary academic and career opportunities.

The task force also must examine the findings of a 2008 report by Minnesota superintendents on strategies for creating a world-class educational system to establish priorities for improving students' academic achievement. The task force may consider other related matters at its discretion.

(b) The commissioner of education must convene the first meeting of the advisory task force on improving students' academic achievement by July 1, 2008. The task force members must adopt internal procedures and standards for subsequent meetings. The task force is composed of the following members:

(1) a representative from a Twin Cities metropolitan area school district, a suburban school district, a school district located in a regional center, and a rural school district, all four representatives appointed by the state demographer based on identified concentrations of low performing low-income students and students of color;

(2) a faculty member of a teacher preparation program at the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development appointed by the college dean or the dean's designee;

(3) a faculty member from the urban teachers program at Metropolitan State University appointed by the university president or the president's designee;

(4) a faculty member from a MnSCU teacher preparation program located outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area appointed by the university president or the president's designee;

(5) a classroom teacher appointed by Education Minnesota;

(6) an expert in early childhood care and education appointed by a state early childhood organization;

(7) a member from each state council representing a community of color appointed by the respective council;

(8) a curriculum specialist with expertise in providing language instruction for nonnative English speakers appointed by a state curriculum organization;

(9) a special education teacher appointed by a state organization of special education educators;

(10) a parent of color appointed by a state parent-teacher organization;

(11) a district testing director appointed by a recognized Minnesota assessment group composed of assessment and evaluation directors and staff and researchers; and

(12) a Minnesota Department of Education staff person with expertise in school desegregation matters appointed by the education commissioner or the commissioner's designee.

A majority of task force members, at their discretion, may invite other representatives of interested public or nonpublic organizations, Minnesota's communities of color, and stakeholders in local and state educational equity to become task force members. A majority of task force members must be persons of color.

(c) Task force members' terms and other task force matters are subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 15.059. The commissioner may reimburse task force members from the education department's current operating budget but may not compensate task force members for task force activities. By February 15, 2009, the task force must submit a written proposal to the education policy and finance committees of the legislature on how to significantly improve students' academic achievement.

(d) The advisory task force expires on February 16, 2009.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.