

Minneapolis Public Schools Administration and Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Leadership,

We hope this letter finds you healthy and safe. We are the Advancing Equity Coalition, a collection of community organizations and education advocates seeking equity for the children of Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). We urge you to take advantage of the immense opportunity you have to ensure every child enrolled in Minneapolis Public Schools has equitable access to effective teaching.

As was shared during the September 24th, 2019 MPS Committee of the Whole [Integration and Choice presentation \(slides 42-46\)](#), schools with a higher percentage of students of color and a higher percentage of students that qualify for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) receive a smaller, less experienced, and less effective pool of teacher applicants. It was also shared that “student growth increases as the median years of teacher experience increases at a school.”

While we know there is much more that makes an effective teacher, this data shows that the average rate of student achievement increases as the average years of teacher experience at a school increase. The data also shows that the district does not provide students of color and students that qualify for free and reduced priced lunch with those teachers.

Below is a comparison of two elementary schools in MPS, Bethune Community School and Lake Harriet Community School-Lower. We compared the percentage of Black students, White students, English Learner students, and students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunch. Additionally, we compared the two schools’ percentage of 3rd grade students who are proficient at reading and the average years of experience of the teachers at each of their schools. As you can see, teachers at Lake Harriet have nearly four times as much experience than the teachers at Bethune, and almost nine out of ten 3rd graders are reading at grade level at Lake Harriet, while fewer than one out of every three 3rd graders are reading at grade level at Bethune.

	Bethune Community School	Lake Harriet Community School-Lower
% of Black students	78.4%	2.4%
% of White students	5.8%	84.5%
% of English Learner students	5.4%	1.7%
% of FRL students:	More than 90%	4.1%
% of 3rd Grade Proficient in Reading	27.8%*	88.2%*
Average Years Teacher of Experience	6.1 years	23.6 years

All data was obtained from MDE and an MPS data request from the most recent year available

*=2018-2019 school year date

We recognize the teachers in each of these buildings are doing the best they can for their students, and that great teachers are defined by more than just the number of years they have been in the classroom. However, it has been clearly and repeatedly documented that Minneapolis Public Schools is chronically under-serving students of color by inequitably distributing teachers across the district.

We believe the Comprehensive District Design provides you with an immense opportunity to increase access to effective teachers for students of color. With changing school populations and the amount of teacher movement that will take place, we see the opportunity for something transformative. MPS must ensure that schools predominantly serving communities of color are able to hire the best teacher candidates.

We demand MPS and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) leadership take immediate action to equitably distribute teachers who will be moving after this school year.

Here are a few ideas:

- Incentivize candidates by offering more desirable conditions at hard-to-staff schools such as additional prep time or smaller class sizes.
- Allow schools that currently have the lowest average teaching experience to start interviewing candidates before other schools in the district.
- Allow teachers who signed up to participate in the ongoing professional development through *Frontlines of Justice* to interview first for racially isolated schools.

These are just a few examples; the options are endless. Minneapolis needs our education leaders to find a solution for children that ensures an equitable education for every child.

We acknowledge that you are all taking steps to better support teachers and students at schools with high rates of teacher turnover. We applaud the agreement that was reached to protect the most racially isolated schools from layoffs. Additionally, the investment being made in Human Resources to provide additional positions to recruit and retain teacher candidates at hard-to-staff schools is a great step forward.

However, if our shared goal and moral obligation is to educate every single child and eliminate institutional racism in MPS, systems that allow for these vast disparities in accessing effective and experienced teachers can no longer stand. As leaders, you must exercise your power to dramatically change our system so that students of color have equitable access to effective teachers – which includes teachers who are experienced, teachers who are creating positive outcomes for students, teachers who believe in their students' brilliance, and teachers who reflect their students' identities.

The equitable redistribution of talent across MPS will not only give all children access to quality teachers but provide support to staff as well. The district could implement an education system with veteran teachers mentoring younger teachers that offers mutual benefits. Younger teachers could support veteran teachers with innovation, so their instruction continues to adapt and stays relevant. Teachers of all experience levels who are seeing significant growth and outcomes for students can participate in, contribute to, and learn from department and grade level teams to further support their instructional practice.

We believe in the undeniable brilliance of every child. We hope MPS and MFT leadership hold this same belief and will demonstrate it through their actions. It is on district leaders and educational professionals to affirm and invest in the brilliance of every child by equitably distributing resources, and teachers are the most important of those resources. While you can be allies in many other fights for racial justice, justice in our education system for students of color is the substantive anti-racist work you have chosen and for which you are uniquely called to lead.

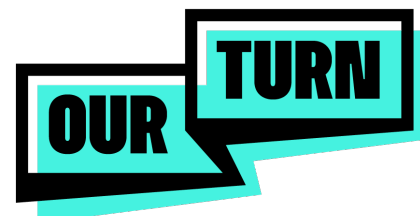
We look forward to your response,



Our Kids Can't Wait.



**Integrated Schools
Minneapolis**



**VOICES FOR
RACIAL JUSTICE**

ORGANIZING | ADVOCACY | POLICY