



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Minnesota/Dakotas Area Conference NAACP

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Testimony before the MN House Education Policy Committee 03/08/21

By: Yusef Mgeni, Vice President

- The proposed amendment raises significant concerns and diverts limited political resources in a direction unlikely to address the current issues in Minnesota schools. . The idea of amending the constitution is problematic because there are more reliable ways to address the achievement gaps.
- Funding, meaningful integration, early childhood education, and a more fully prepared and diverse teaching force all have proven track records in improving educational outcomes (and other important results) for students of color. There is little to no evidence, on the other hand, that simply amending the constitution would make a significant impact.
- Certainly, the NAACP shares the view that the state’s achievement gaps are a serious and long-lasting problem requiring immediate attention. We also share the view that there are policies that have proven to address such gaps, but the example provided by the Federal Reserve is not among the most proven strategies.
- Meaningful integration, or what the NAACP recognizes as “an inclusive learning environment,” fully funded and fully implemented on a broad scale, e.g.), fully funding special education & ELL programming, increasing the inclusion of qualified teachers, the curriculum and pre-K education are proven models for addressing the achievement gaps. Amending state constitutional language and hoping for subsequent litigation to enforce the new language is nothing more than wishful thinking.

Finally, we would like to recommend a book to the members of the Ed Policy Committee: ***Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works***, by Rucker C. Johnson (an Economist), who has done the most comprehensive research across 3 generations—nationally—on that topic, in 50 yrs.

