



PRESS RELEASE

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Area School Districts Receive \$750,000 Grow Your Own Grants

Area school districts that are members of the Minnesota Educators Partnership (MEP) received two \$750,000 grants from the Minnesota Department of Education Grow Your Own Grant Program.

Grow Your Own programs are partnerships that recruit and prepare local community members to enter the teaching profession and return to teach in their communities. The grant process involved the collaboration of MEP school districts and focused on the enrollments of the member districts with the highest number of students of color, but little diversity of staff. Staff of color comprise only 2-4% of the member districts' workforces, compared to 29%-58% of their student populations.

The first \$750,000 grant is for the MEP Teachers of Tomorrow initiative, which focuses on high school students. This pilot effort will support 100 students of color who are interested in teaching to successfully graduate from high school and matriculate to college. Each scholar will meet every other week with a program navigator and have access to tutoring and other support to help them succeed. All of the 100 scholars will be individuals of color who are high school juniors or seniors.

The second \$750,000 grant for the MEP Teaching Fellows initiative will support 15 individuals of color in successfully completing a Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB)-approved teaching program. Fellows will receive \$10,000 per year in scholarships and/or stipends. They will each be paired with a current teacher from one of the participating districts, who will serve as ongoing mentors throughout the program, and will receive additional support. All 15 fellows will be individuals of color. The fellows will either be current employees of the partnering school districts and/or reside in the geographic boundaries of the districts.

MEP is a partnership between Minnesota State University, Mankato and Faribault, Le Sueur-Henderson, Mankato, Owatonna, St. Peter (2022-2023), Tri-City United, and Waseca public school districts. The mission of the MEP is to enhance teacher preparation, provide professional development, and advocate for improvements in the education system in Minnesota to serve and grow all learners.

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