



**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

## UpLiFT Movement Secures State Funding to Revolutionize Teacher Workforce Diversity

Saint Paul, MN - June 26, 2024 - [UpLiFT Movement](#), a local nonprofit dedicated to educational equity, has been awarded significant funding from the Minnesota Department of Education and the Professional Educators Licensing and Standards Board. This funding will drive the organization's groundbreaking initiatives to cultivate and celebrate black male educators within the teaching profession.

In alignment with the state's recent initiative to expand pathways into teaching and address educator shortages, as recently [announced by Governor Tim Walz](#), UpLiFT Movement's efforts will complement the state's broader goals of enhancing teacher diversity and support. This new initiative underscores the importance of providing robust support systems for educators from underrepresented communities.

Under the banner of "UpLiFTing Minnesota," the nonprofit will launch two transformative projects, "Boosting Support For New and current BIPOC Teachers Through Culturally Sustaining Mentorship" and the "UpLiFT Empowerment Coalition: BIPOC Educator Insight Initiative." These initiatives are set to reshape the education landscape by fostering a more diverse and inclusive teacher workforce and providing personalized support for teachers who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

A strategic partnership has been forged between **UpLiFT Movement** (UpLiFT) and [Edifying Teachers](#) (Edifying). Founder of UpLiFT, Jonathan C. W. Jones, M.Ed., and Founder of Edifying, Dr. Rudy Ruiz are both esteemed members of [Education Leaders of Color](#). This collaboration will bring together a network of local and national organizations committed to diversifying the teaching profession. Notable figures such as Robert Hendricks of He Is Me Institute, Curtis Valentine of Real Men Teach, Sharif El-Mekki of the Center for Black Educator Development, and others, will play pivotal roles in this transformative work.

"We are thrilled to embark on this journey towards a more diverse and equitable teacher workforce," said Jonathan C. W. Jones, Founder and Executive Director of the UpLiFT Movement. "Through strategic partnerships and innovative programs, we are committed to uplifting and empowering black male educators, ultimately enriching the educational experience for students across Minnesota."



Over three years, UpLiFT Movement's initiatives will impact 100 black male educators, offering them paid mentoring opportunities, paid teacher-researcher opportunities, and a survey tool to assess BIPOC workplace experiences. This comprehensive approach aims to empower black male educators, enhance their professional growth, and create a more inclusive educational environment.

For more information about the UpLiFT Movement and its initiatives, please visit [www.upliftmovement.org](http://www.upliftmovement.org).

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**UpLiFT Movement** is a mission-driven educational organization founded in 2021, centered on cultivating and celebrating black male educators. With a national network, UpLiFT supports pK-12 educators' professional journey, through recruitment, retention, and beyond through professional development, culturally sustaining mentorship, and affinity spaces in partnership with schools, districts, institutions, and organizations.

**Edifying Teachers** is a mission-driven educational organization founded in 2021 to better support, retain, and develop teachers through personalized mentorship. With a diverse national network, Edifying Teachers supports pK-12 teachers throughout their professional journey, working in partnership with schools, districts, and educator preparation programs to support teacher residents, early career teachers, as well as National Board Certification candidates.