

Date of Hearing: Tuesday, January 11, 2021

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Salma Abdi

Affiliated Organization (grade and high school): Rochester Century High School

City of Residence: Rochester, Minnesota

Dear Chair Davine and fellow committee members. My name is Salma Abdi and I'm a current junior at Century High School in Rochester, MN. I'm also a youth representative for congressional district 1 on the Minnesota Youth Council. The MYC is made up of 36 youth (4 from each Congressional District and 4-at large members). With the MYC, we have the opportunity to work with state agencies, aid the legislature, and serve in different capacities across the state. For example, I serve as a member of the Children's Cabinet's advisory council. Furthermore, we also use our resources, knowledge, and experience to work in 4 focus areas on different sub-committees which consist of (Juvenile Justice, Education Excellence, Mental Health and wellbeing, and Environmental Justice) which were all identified as important things to youth in our community.

Within our positions, we hear directly from the youth in our community and as the student body secretary of my school, I hear these issues from my fellow peers. We are in need of more resources and aid, especially in greater MN. Because as we move further away from urban centers access to technology, resources, and testing decreases in more rural areas. Not only that, but students who do have access to technology are not receiving a quality education. I've experienced this first-hand as a junior studying for standardized tests like the ACT and SAT where I've spent upwards of \$500 on materials. With that privilege I can see the difficulties of my peers who can't access these things which is why allocating money to our education system is essential.

We cannot wait around for a 5-year plan or a quick and easy investment till the pandemic is over because the inequities across the state are evidence of deeper issues that have existed for decades. Additionally, this investment this year will aid in getting resources, so our education gap does not affect the graduation rates of students, especially those in areas that lack resources.

Representatives, I urge you to closely consider the impact of making sure no child is left behind and that we all have the ability to succeed with the help of our communities. When we invest in our schools, I believe the quality of our education will grow and it will help future generations ending cycles of generational poverty and aiding in the reinvestment of our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue and I am happy to take any questions you might have for me about my experience as a student or my hope for the future.