



Re: SF 1743

March 26, 2019

Senator Carla Nelson  
3235 Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Shelly Christensen  
577 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Nelson and Representative Christensen,

The governor is committed to aiding school districts that chose to close their doors in order to protect the health and wellbeing of their students through a tumultuous winter. Thank you for working to pass legislation to meet that goal.

I support providing school districts flexibility in determining which days should be counted as instructional days to meet the requirements under statute for this school year. We have seen districts across the state have to balance the health and safety concerns with the need to make sure we are preparing the World's Best Workforce during extreme cold, blizzards, tornadoes, and likely floods this spring. I believe school districts are best equipped to decide which days needed to be canceled to ensure the safety of their students, and will not penalize school districts for making that decision.

Just as the governor is committed to not penalizing school districts, school districts must not penalize employees or contractors. I am glad that both bodies incorporated provisions to protect employees' pay and ensure probationary teachers are not adversely impacted under these extraordinary circumstances. It is also important to guard contractors like school bus drivers and food and nutrition employees in the same way. I strongly support language in the House version, SF 1743 1<sup>st</sup> Unofficial Engrossment that would require contractors be paid when work was canceled due to inclement weather.

I look forward to working with you and the other conferees to have this bill reach the governor quickly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary Cathryn Ricker'.

Mary Cathryn Ricker, NBCT  
Education Commissioner

cc: Senator Jasinski, Senator Wiger, Representative Youakim, Representative Urdahl