



February 21, 2017

Health and Human Services Finance
Chair Matt Dean and Committee Members

RE: **HF 960 School-linked Mental Health Grants**

Dear Chair Dean and Committee Members:

Fraser is a non-profit mental health care provider and Minnesota's oldest and most experienced provider of autism services. Separate from our autism program, our mental health program helps children with other mental health needs improve their social, emotional and behavioral functioning, resulting in improvements at home, in school, and in the community.

Fraser currently has school-linked mental health programs in four school type settings—Edina Public Schools, Minneapolis Public Schools, Ramsey Head Start, and Anoka Head Start. In 2016 we served 81 different children—a large percentage of those children were preschoolers, however, with our newest partnership with Edina Public Schools our expectation is we will serve more school-age children in 2017. These partnerships have been extremely beneficial to the children and families we serve.

It has been our experience that co-locating mental health services at schools helps address many of the current barriers to accessing needed mental health services including transportation and coordination of services.

For these reasons Fraser supports HF 960 which aims to increase the availability of school-linked mental health services across the state.

Thank you,

Ben Gustafson, JD
Compliance & Regulatory Analyst

