



Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair
Education Finance
February 1, 2023

Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN) and the MN Coalition of Licensed Social Workers (Coalition of Social Workers), we are writing in support of House File 8, a bill that appropriates funding for school support personnel.

NASW - MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing nearly 2000 social workers. The Coalition of Social Workers unifies membership organizations for licensed social workers, including school social workers. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in mental health practice and serving the needs of children and families.

Social workers are trained in the practice of understanding the connection between a person's behavior and the environment in which they live. Students' lives at home and at school are connected. School social workers use their unique skills to ensure that students have the necessary support in other areas of their life so they can achieve their full academic potential in the classroom.

The heart of House File 8 acknowledges that schools need a team of support personnel to serve the whole child well. School social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors and chemical health counselors work together to address the increasingly complex student needs that show up in schools across MN every day. House File 8 provides important funding to schools so they can maintain a team of these professionals in every building. In addition to the option of hiring new full-time staff, we support language that allows additional hours for existing part-time staff and permanent positions for those staff funded by expiring Federal American Rescue Plan dollars.

Please support House File 8. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen E. Goodenough'.

Karen E. Goodenough, PhD, LGSW
Executive Director
NASW-MN

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Karen A. Frees'.

Karen A. Frees, MSSW, LICSW
Chair
Coalition of Social Workers

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jennifer Arneson'.

Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW
Legislative Consultant
NASW-MN
Coalition of Social Workers