

February 25, 2021

Dear Chair Davnie and Members of the House Education Finance Committee,

As a state agency, the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) has an important statutory role to inform policy makers on our constituent community and needs. Thus, MCLA writes to express support for provisions with House File 1065 which appropriates needed investments in summer education programs.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, reports across the state and country consistently show that Communities of Color and Indigenous communities have disproportionately endured the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also critical to note that even before the pandemic, Minnesota persistently ranked towards the bottom of all states with respect to the achievement and opportunity gaps for students of color and American Indian students.

If we are to truly expect different results and start closing the gaps that exist for our communities, we must make the intentional investments to support the diverse needs of every student. More specifically, the proposed \$3,000,000 each year is for translation services of which \$2,000,000 each year is for grants to support school districts and charter schools with translation services is an important step to addressing institutional language access barriers.

Latino Minnesotans continuously demonstrate that, despite consistent biases and barriers, we are fully capable and eager to engage educators with respect student learning and improving outcomes. However, we need our institutions to truly begin to value the assets and knowledge our families bring to the school community through legitimate and authentic engagement.

Similarly, providing districts and charter schools greater funding in EL funding is vitally important to provide more equitable and essential supports for an increasing student demographic of our state. As MCLA has identified EL funding as a top priority in education, we are pleased by the effort to adjust this formula that has not been changed for over 15 years.

Additionally, in order for educators to develop relationships and foster learning environments that are key to learning, supporting the emphasis and proposed investment on mental health supports and embedding social and emotional needs of students in H.F. 1065 would be essential to this effort. Moreover, the appropriations for community partnerships serve as a unique opportunity to organizations that have and continue to serve as a vital resource for students and families.

To conclude, H.F. 1065 includes good policy and smart investments that not only will help mitigate the learning loss caused by COVID-19, but also support student needs that existed before the pandemic. Moving forward, MCLA is please to stand ready and committed to support this effort this session.

Thank you for your leadership and doing what is right for all of our students.

Sincerely,



Samantha N. Diaz
Legislative and Policy Director
Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

Greetings,

My name is Amanda Sullivan. I am a Woodbury resident, mom of a Stillwater Schools student, and a professor at the University of Minnesota. I am writing in support of HF1065/SF960. This bill ensures essential funding to provide for the short and long-term success and wellbeing of Minnesota's students, educators, and schools. Now more than ever, the funding for mental health and academic programming and personnel is critical to advancing state goals for education, health, and workforce development. This bill will support necessary programming, staffing, and pipeline issues to support Minnesota's students and educators. If we are to recover from the many detrimental effects the pandemic has had for our communities and economies, we must have this funding. As an educator of future school psychologists, I can attest to the necessity of funding for both personnel and personnel pipeline development. Minnesota has a chronic, severe shortage of school psychologists and lags behind most states in availability of school psychologists to provide academic, behavioral, and mental health services in schools. Critically, school psychologists are trained to provide not just services to individual students but the whole school community to support wellbeing and achievement. Yet Minnesota doesn't have enough school psychologists or other student support personnel to address existing student or educator needs. This bill will provide sorely needed funding to increase availability of personnel to support our state's students and help to address long-standing educational disparities that have been exacerbated. This bill provides for services that will support entire school communities, as well as services and supports for students, groups, and communities made especially vulnerable. Support for this bill is support for strong families, schools, and communities.

Thank you,
Amanda Sullivan
Woodbury, MN

Greetings,

My name is Tarah Stockwell and I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota studying school psychology. I am writing in support of HF1065/SF960 as it is important to provide the needed resources for students to thrive in their communities.

Sincerely,
Tarah Stockwell

Hello,

My name is Dr. Faith Miller and I am a resident of Woodbury MN, working at the University of Minnesota Department of Educational Psychology. I am writing to voice my support of HF1065/SF960 relating to education finance and modifying provisions for education here in Minnesota. The disparities that exist in our schools here in Minnesota are among the worst in the nation, and we know that we need

to take sincere action if we are going to change our outcomes. With that in mind, I wanted to highlight a few things about these companion bills that I am excited about, most notably the introduction of Minnesota Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MnMTSS).

The implementation of a statewide education framework, **Equity-Centered MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports)** would offer a tremendous opportunity toward equitable, systemic change in Minnesota's schools. MTSS is an empirically supported framework designed to shape all aspects of how a district operates. Issues like family engagement, cultural responsiveness, and professional learning are all shaped within a well-implemented MTSS framework. By designing a framework through a process that authentically engages marginalized communities and deliberately focuses on equitable access to educational opportunities, we can start to move toward positive change for Minnesota's students.

In addition to this framework, I am encouraged by the appropriation for student support personnel. Workforce development is critical to ensuring shortages are met, and in our current context, need far surpasses our capacity to provide preventative and responsive services to students. As a trainer of school psychologists in the state, I am hopeful that, if enacted, this bill will push our great state forward toward educational equity and providing our educational system with resources it so critically needs.

If I can provide further information, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,
Dt. Faith Miller

Faith Miller, Ph.D., LP, NCSP

Associate Professor, School Psychology
Department of Educational Psychology
Affiliated Faculty, Institute for Translational Research in Children's Mental Health
College of Education & Human Development

Dear Representatives Burt and Moller,

My name is Elyse Farnsworth. I am an Arden Hills resident (Rep. Moller's district) working at the University of Minnesota as a faculty member in the School Psychology Program. I am writing in support of HF1065/SF960 and urge you to vote in favor of this legislation. It is my understanding that if this legislation is passed it would provide funding for mental health programming for P12 students and staff, hiring of additional student support personnel (which includes school psychologists, counselors, nurses, chemical dependency personnel), and support for graduate trainees in these school-based mental health fields.

Being a school psychology faculty member and a previous educator/school psychologist for almost two decades, I know how important these contributions are for our students' well-being and academic success. I've seen first-hand what psychoeducation in schools can do to prevent deaths by suicide (e.g., I've had students speak up when worried about a friend who has suicidal ideation after learning about the signs of depression and risk for suicide). I've witnessed the impact that school psychologists, school counselors, and other support staff have on supporting the work classroom teacher can do and providing safe spaces for our students to provide an education that addresses the whole person (i.e., students are not ready to benefit from instruction if they need social, emotional, or behavioral supports

- these staff can provide these and are essential in schools). Finally, I know how important high quality training for these support professions is. We must provide training that equips our school psychologists and other school-based mental health professionals to be ready to address the mental health crisis that our country is facing.

I have a private practice where I see children and adolescents. The work I do in that practice is valuable; however, I know there are many families that have barriers to accessing private mental health services. Services that can be provided through the schools are essential to addressing the mental health pandemic. School is compulsory, which makes it an excellent place to reach and support all young people who are suffering.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if I can be a resource. Thank you for considering my request, and I hope you will support this important legislation.

Best,

Elyse

Elyse M. Farnsworth, PhD, LP, NCSP
Lecturer, Director of Clinical Training, & Specialist Program Coordinator
University of Minnesota School Psychology Program

Greetings,

My name is Mollie Weeks. I am a St. Paul resident working at South St. Paul Secondary School. I am writing in support of HF1065/SF960. There is significant need for qualified mental health personnel and programming in public schools and the need will likely increase substantially in response to COVID-19. We can better prepare for the long-term and intense student need in the wake of COVID-19 by providing extra funding for mental health programming now.

Best,
Mollie

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Mollie Weeks M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, School Psychology
University of Minnesota- Twin Cities



Independent School District 625
360 Colborne Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-3299

Date: February 24, 2021
To: Education Finance Committee Members
RE: HF 1065—Governor’s E-12 Budget Recommendations

On behalf of the St. Paul Board of Education Directors and the St. Paul School community I am writing in support of HF 1065—that provides a substantial investment in E-12 education. The increases in the formula allowance, reducing the EL and Special education cross subsidy and ongoing funding for the 4000 school readiness plus seats into the base are just a few of the important provisions to stabilize school funding across the state.

St. Paul Public Schools current special education and EL cross subsidy are estimated to exceed \$60 million, which is regular education funding that we cannot use to provide individual instruction or support services for pupils because the state’s categorical mandated services are not funded. In addition, 266 four year school readiness plus seats will not be funded unless this committee acts as the current funding has expired. SPPS prioritizes EL, Free/reduced lunch, highly mobile or homeless, foster care, or special ed for our free four year old program, that includes transportation and has a with a proven track record for preparing these scholars for kindergarten.

Additional funding for Teacher of Color Grow Your Own Programs, teacher pathways, and mentoring are also critical for recruiting and retaining high quality teachers of color—a priority of our district. Funding for student support services and full service community schools are also critical investments.

I want to point a concern related to Article 2, Section 11 that reduces the eligibility criteria for student access to state approved alternative and extended time program. Student choice and access to high quality summer and extended day programs would be limited by this change. Providing students with additional instructional and enrichment opportunities is critical to increasing our graduation rate across all demographics and ethnic groups. We don’t want to wait until students fail or are credit deficient to get additional instructional support. For example, students at Washington BioSmart Technology Magnet—a 90/90/90 (90% kids of color, 90% free and reduced lunch, and 90% graduation rate and college and career placement) are offered a wide range of extended day programming that provides additional instruction, enrichment, electives and athletic classes, including the opportunity to participate in the award winning Navy ROTC. The extended time program is key to Washington’s overall success. This is just one example, the change would also impact our elementary programs extended day programs, K-8 summer school, and high school students who may chose an alternative program, like Gateway to College at St. Paul College, because a traditional high school is not a good fit. While many students that we serve in these programs are not at grade level or credit deficient, allowing schools to support and intervene early is best practices. Robust enrichment opportunities, critical interventions, programs to prevent the summer slide --all in safe environment with caring and trained adults --should be maintained. I would urge the committee to remove that section from the bill.

I want to thank the Governor, Chair Davnie and members for your support to invest in education. The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted families in St. Paul and this critical support is necessary now more than ever.



February 25, 2021

Chair Davnie
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55103

Re: MDE Budget Bill (HF1065)

Dear Chair Davnie and members of the committee,

This has been an unprecedented year for Minnesota students, with school closures, the digital divide, and disrupted learning compounding existing barriers to a high-quality, equitable education. This year, more than ever, it is essential that the legislature prioritize significant investments in research-backed strategies that can help move the needle to address achievement gaps, disparities in discipline, inequitable enrollment rates in rigorous coursework, lack of access to high-quality early learning, and much more. If we miss this chance, a generation of students could be left behind. Here, we highlight several priorities from the Governor's budget bills that we believe are most critical for student success in the coming years..

HF HF1065: INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS

While we address the impact of COVID-19, it's important to also invest in efforts to address some of the inequities that existed prior to the pandemic. HF1065 does this by investing in a number of programs that are meant to provide more equitable access to rigorous coursework, improve school climate, and racially diversify the teacher workforce. We support many of the proposed investments, and raise particular attention to the following:

- Expanding Rigorous Coursework for BIPOC students and students in greater Minnesota (Lines 43.20-44.12): In Minnesota, gaps in advanced coursework enrollment start in elementary school with Gifted and Talented and grow larger as students move through their K-12 education.¹ To address this, HF1065 would invest \$5 million annually to expand access to rigorous coursework programming—Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), concurrent enrollment (CE), and career and technical education (CTE)—for students of color and other underserved populations.
- Nonexclusionary Discipline Grants (Lines 53.8-53.17): There is growing research that nonexclusionary practices help to reduce suspensions and improve school climate,² while exclusionary practices have a negative impact on student achievement³ and long-term outcomes.⁴ This grant would help to address Minnesota's long and well-documented history of disproportionately suspending and expelling students of color and students with disabilities.⁵
- Early Learning Scholarships (67.11-67.16): Currently, 40,000 low-income Minnesota children under five cannot afford high-quality early learning programs.⁶ Early learning scholarships address this by giving Minnesota's neediest families the financial support to help pay for high-quality child care that prepares them for school.

¹ Kaput, K. (November 2020). "Closing the Rigorous Coursework Gap: Supporting College and Career Readiness for Minnesota's Students of Color." EdAllies.

² Augustine, C., Engberg, J, Grimm, G., et. al. (2018). "Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions? An Evaluation of the Impact of Restorative Practices in a Mid-Sized Urban School District." RAND Corporation.

³ Pearman, F., Curran, C., Fisher, B. & Gardella, J. (October 2019). "Are Achievement Gaps Related to Discipline Gaps? Evidence from National Data." American Educational Research Association.

⁴ Shollenberger, R. (April 2013). "Racial Disparities in School Suspension and Subsequent Outcomes: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997." The Civil Rights Project at UCLA.

⁵ Kaput, K. (July 2019). "For Students of Color With Special Needs, Action on School Discipline is Urgent." EdAllies.

⁶ Close Gaps by 5 website. (Accessed February 16, 2021). <http://closegapsby5.org/>

- Grow Your Own Program Grants (Lines 49.13-50.24):- Research indicates that teachers who are prepared through Grow Your Own Programs are more racially diverse than traditional teacher preparation programs and, after completing the program, are more likely to be retained.⁷ We support this allocation because it creates more pathways into the teaching profession.
- Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Training Program (Lines 49.6-49.12): In 2016, the Minnesota Legislature did a one-time investment of \$3 million for the Northwest Regional Partnership to develop and provide high-quality opportunities for concurrent enrollment teachers to earn additional graduate-level credentials in their subject area. Through this partnership, 605 teachers from 196 districts across Minnesota have enrolled in the program.⁸ Given the benefits of concurrent enrollment, the Minnesota Legislature should reinvest in this program.

We also support targeted investments that would improve MDE’s ability to get clear, timely data that can help families, students, and educators, particularly given the need for more information due to the impact of COVID-19. This includes making improvements to the state’s Report Card, assessments results, data disaggregation, and more.

In addition to these investments, HF1065 would also make a needed policy change to compensatory revenue—state funds that are supposed to support the academic achievement of students who are not meeting state standards. Currently, only 50% of the money has to be allocated directly to the schools that generate the funds, and the rest can be used across the district. The proposal would change this to require 80% of the funds go directly to the school, which is important in making sure that the funds are going to the students they are supposed to support.

HF1064: ADDRESSING LEARNING LOSS AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

We also support HF1064, which was heard in the House last week and contains a number of investments that will be essential to COVID recovery, and should be prioritized by the committee. There are a growing number of studies which indicate that learning loss—particularly for students of color and low-income students—due to COVID-19 school closures is something we cannot ignore.⁹ HF1064 contains a number of investments that would provide needed student support and accelerate learning, including expanding access to tutoring, summer preschool, learning acceleration and college readiness initiatives, and community partnerships. We also support HF1064’s investment in student well-being. When we talk about COVID-19 recovery, it’s important that we not only focus on academics, but also on student social-emotional health. This bill starts to address this need by investing in neighborhood programs and a mental health support expansion.

These bills provide several important targeted funding streams to help our state’s most underserved students and we hope to see these investments advanced through the Senate education omnibus bill.

Sincerely,



Matt Shaver
Policy Director
mshaver@edalliesmn.org

⁷ Gist, C., Bianco, M., & Lynn, M. (2018). “Examining Grow Your Own Programs Across the Teacher Development Continuum: Mining Research on Teachers of Color and Nontraditional Educator Pipelines.” *Journal of Teacher Education*.

⁸ Kovash, J. (2020). “Regional Partnership: Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Training Program Report to the Legislature.” *Lakes Country Service Cooperative*

⁹ Kogan, V. & Lavertu, S. (January 2021). “The COVID-19 Pandemic and Student Achievement on Ohio’s Third-Grade English Language Arts Assessment.” *The Ohio State University*; Kuhfeld, M., Tarasawa, B., Johnson, A., Ruzek, E. & Lewis, K. (November 2020). “Learning during COVID-19: Initial findings on students’ reading and math achievement and growth.” *Collaborative for Student Growth*.



February 21, 2021

Dear Members of the Education Finance Committee:

NAMI Minnesota is writing to share its views on HF 1065.

First, we strongly support expanding the school support personnel in the schools. They play an important part of our school mental health system. With a rising number of students struggling with their mental health, it is important that schools be able to add this resource. We would add that an additional purpose is for them to collaborate with school-linked mental health programs. We would also suggest using some of the language from HF 950 that defines school mental health systems such as “promote school climate and social emotional learning...work in strategic partnership with students and their families.” And we would add “promote prevention, early identification and interventions...and enhance the mental health of all students.” An additional measure to include in the report would be suspensions.

We support the funding for multi-tiered systems of support. It could be clarified that an existing program in a district could access the funds. We know that due to turn over in school personnel additional training of staff may be needed. It is good to see funding for staff training to learn more about nonexclusionary discipline practices.

Funding to create a more diverse group of student support personnel is an excellent idea. There is a bill moving through the legislature to create a more culturally diverse and informed mental health workforce as well. We would ask that perhaps that you consider a lead within the Department of Education on mental health instead of or in addition to a school health services support position. We need someone within MDE that can be a resource for districts on mental health and suicide prevention and response.

NAMI supports the funding for equity diversity and inclusion anti-bias professional development and for trauma informed. We are concerned that far too many BIPOC students, particularly boys, are placed in the EBD category. It is an area that needs a deeper dive to ensure it's not based on biases. This is especially important knowing the trauma that so many students experienced during the pandemic.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on the bill. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director



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MINNESOTA SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS ASSOCIATION

February 24, 2021

TO: Members, House Education Finance Committee
FROM: Meghan Hickey, President, Minnesota School Psychologists Association
RE: Support for HF 1065

The Minnesota School Psychologists Association (MSPA) is proud to lend its support to HF 1065, the Governor's budget recommendations for Minnesota's elementary and secondary education system. The proposals contained in the bill provide school districts with needed revenue and are comprehensive in dealing with students' academic and social-emotional learning needs.

MSPA is particularly interested in the proposed revenue stream in Article 2, Section 14, that would create on-going funding for districts to hire new student support personnel to help meet the needs of students throughout the state. Minnesota ranks near the bottom in the number of support personnel in Minnesota school districts across all categories of student support personnel. The services provided by school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, and school guidance counselors are invaluable to students on a variety of levels and it is heartening to see the Governor's recommendations containing a commitment to remedying the current situation.

One of the issues with past efforts to increase the number of student support personnel is that most were grant proposals with no on-going funding attached. While this brought new student support personnel into school districts, it has been difficult for districts to maintain those positions without continued funding dedicated to this purpose. We strongly believe this budget recommendation would solve that problem by incorporating the revenue stream into the base. Further, the flexibility contained in the bill to allow it to be used in cooperative units would vastly improve the reach of student support personnel to students who need these services.

While not in the bill, language in the budget recommendations also call for a second strategy to increase the number of licensed student support personnel coming out of higher education systems. MSPA believes that pursuit of that approach will also produce positive results and the organization supports it wholeheartedly.

MSPA members provide a wide range of services to students throughout Minnesota and along with our fellow student support professionals work on teams to make certain that student needs are met. I believe the commitment expressed in this budget recommendation is a recognition of these efforts and they are greatly appreciated.

Do not hesitate to contact MSAP if you need further information or clarification. I can be reached at hick0146@umn.edu. MSPA legislative chairs Marilyn Leifgen (mleifgren@gmail.com) and Sally Baas (baas@csp.edu)