

Monday, March 15 - HF 699 (Mueller)



To: Members of the Education Policy Committee

From: Minnesota School Boards Association – representing all 333 school boards across Minnesota

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Madame Chair and committee members,

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is pleased to offer support of HF 699, Rep. Mueller’s bill to create a pilot program to increase short-call substitute teachers.

MSBA has long been a proponent of seeking ways to increase substitute teachers. In fact, in 2019 our Delegate Assembly passed a resolution calling for a pilot program to increase substitute teachers.

School districts across Minnesota are facing challenges finding substitute teachers each day. Some are even offering creative bonuses to attract subs. There is an urgent need in our schools. Some of our schools have up to 73 classrooms without a teacher. Usually, several retirees work as subs, but aren’t now because of COVID. Often times we have paraprofessionals work side-by-side with teachers and might be the best person to be in the classroom when a teacher is absent. We need to bring more flexibility into our schools, ideally to bring people into the schools as subs and might continue on in a teaching path. Again, ideally we would be allowed to have individuals with associate degrees substitute in our classrooms.

The shortage of substitutes creates an additional stressor on staff members as they are called upon to cover for their colleagues. This removes them from their preparation time that must be made up later in the day or in the evening. As the year goes on the combined effect of coverage creates a negative culture in buildings. Additionally, a shortage of substitutes can force districts to limit if not deny leaves of other types, like professional development.

Madame Chair, and committee members, we appreciate your time and consideration, and we would be happy to answer any questions.

Minnesota School Boards Association