



April 13, 2021

Representative Fue Lee, Capital Investment Committee Chair
485 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
rep.fue.lee@house.mn

Dear Chair Lee,

Thank you for including important investments in education in the Delete All amendment to HF 337, the House omnibus bonding bill. These provisions provide access to resources for our libraries, the Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and the Blind, and the Perpich Center for Arts Education. All of these entities are critical components of our education infrastructure in Minnesota and provide fundamental access to resources, services, and arts for our students, families, educators, and communities.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) believes that part of our work is to ensure that libraries are available and provide access to each and every community member with resources and services that create opportunities for learning, support literacy and education, and help shape new ideas and perspectives. As a result, one of our goals is to assist school districts, libraries, and other educational organizations in the acquisition of funds to provide safe, high-quality, welcoming, and accessible education facilities that support library access to all residents in Minnesota. With 12 regional public library systems and 355 public library locations, there is at least one library in all 87 Minnesota counties. Roughly 70% of Minnesota residents have a library card. Libraries provide patrons with high internet speed, wireless internet, and access to computers. Libraries played an essential role during the pandemic to ensure library patrons had adequate internet access to learn, work, and stay informed. Funding for library construction grants provides a competitive process for new construction or remodeling of public libraries to improve access to library services for people with disabilities. All Minnesotans deserve access to our great libraries.

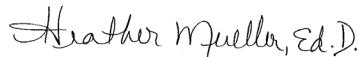
The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind and the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf have provided educational services to students who are Blind/Visually Impaired, Deafblind, and Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing for over 150 years. The Academies are public schools that serve students from over 60 different school districts. All supports for the Academies are important and the investments for asset preservation improvements in the bill are critical as the Academies do not have the authority to issue tax levies or bonds.

The Perpich Center for Arts Education has been a pillar of arts access, education, and professional development in the state for over 30 years. Their Arts High School provides a unique arts opportunity for students in grades 11 and 12. Perpich has been an invaluable partner for MDE in an array of arts areas like creating and enhancing professional development for arts educators, revising and implementing the arts academic standards, and developing recommendations for distance and hybrid learning. Investing asset preservation improvements for

Perpich is critical to the success of their mission and maintaining the robust presence of arts in Minnesota's education system.

Again, thank you for these investments in some of Minnesota's most important educational institutions. All of our students and communities stand to benefit.

Sincerely,



Heather Mueller, Ed.D.
Commissioner

c: Members of the House Capital Investment Committee