

April 7, 2021

Representative Jim Davnie
Chair, House Education Finance Committee
443 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Representative Julie Sandstede
Vice Chair, House Education Finance Committee
411 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Representative Ron Kresha
Republican Lead, House Education Finance Committee
207 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Davnie, Vice Chair Sandstede, and Lead Kresha,

Thank you so much for including Special Education Recovery Services in the House Education Finance Division Omnibus Bill! We write with heartfelt thanks on behalf of our organizations and the children who have disabilities we work with across the state, who have struggled with accessing education services throughout the pandemic.

As you well know, despite tremendous efforts by teachers and schools, many children who have disabilities have a longer road to recovery as a result of disruptions from Covid-19. The Recovery Education provisions in HF 1065, DE 1 (Article 5, Section 6) will be a tremendous help to children with disabilities to make up for what they've missed.

Inclusion in this bill sends a message to families that you've heard us. Thank you! We look forward to working with you as this bill progresses to see this important step passed into law!

Sincerely,



April 6, 2021 / HF1065:

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Dr. Seann M. Dikkers, MACHE Executive Director

Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators - MACHE

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Association of Christian Homeschool Educators in opposition to a new state curricular mandate included in the HF1065, the House Omnibus Education Finance bill (Article 2, Sec 1, Subd. 9 (5)). Specifically, MACHE is concerned with the additional requirement of “indigenous education” as unnecessary, unclear, and intrusive.

This requirement for indigenous education is not needed. Part of the expectations for social studies education already includes study of Native Minnesotans including tribes and peoples that lived in Minnesota prior to European and early American settlement of the region. This has long been part of our social studies curriculum and segregating it apart from other subjects implies giving this field of study equal weight in terms of time and workload with multi-year topics like Mathematics and Basic Communication. That is a highly subjective emphasis.

The requirement is unclear. The word “indigenous” is simply an adjective used for something that is originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; a synonym with “native”. As the noun used is “education”, then this term actually refers to naturally occurring *education*. This could then legitimately be used to require learning *like* Minnesota tribes learn, learning by experience, or it could simply mean a parent teaching their children - the most naturally occurring form of education. The latter interpretation is fine with the homeschool community, but likely not the intent of this language. The wording does not carry the clarity that is expected in legal writing.

The requirement is intrusive. The basic, inalienable, right of parents to raise and educate their children is conducted in cooperation with the state within the boundaries of indigenous (or natural) law. Where the state could add numerous areas of particular study, for each political wave that blows, they also need to be done within the consent of the governed. (For instance, we could easily add “computer programming” as an “essential” area of study to thrive in the modern world, express ourselves, and to be independent.) Each area of focus requires time and necessarily removes time from other areas of study. Requirements are not to be added lightly or done where they are not commonly agreed on. Where some subjects have different levels of importance to different people, they will make curricular choices for the good of the child. This autonomy is not necessarily a denigration of a topic, but a right to customize learning. We regard tolerance for difference as a primary value in education.

The purpose and point of a general outline of instructional expectations is to sustain a *common* understanding of the current law pointing to the absolute basics of communication (reading and writing), mathematics and science, and social studies for and towards the core elements needed for basic citizenship. Where these subjects have heightened value that is commonly agreed upon, picking a particular narrow topic and elevating it is driven by political preference and subjective opinion, not common law.

I encourage you to remove the addition of new state reporting requirements from the Education Policy Omnibus Bill.

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: April 7, 2021 (HF 1065)
To: Members of the Education Finance Committee
From: Hugo Barrios
Affiliation: Teacher
City of Residence: Woodbury, MN

*Please record your written testimony here and return this to sarah.burt@hosue.mn as an OCR compliant .pdf
(optical character recognition)*

My name is Hugo Barrios; I am from Bogota – Colombia. Over the last twelve years, I have been working with Dual Immersion programs as an Associate Educator, Family Liaison and teacher, teaching a new culture and a new language where students grow confident, competent and successful. Currently I have a bachelor and master’s degree in law, and three years ago, I got a master's degree from the University of Minnesota (Teaching License in Elementary Education with a focus on Dual Language and Immersion).

Currently I have a Tier 2 license. I have already passed the pedagogy exams and I am studying to take the content exams to get my a Tier 3 license, but unfortunately I have been taking some of the content exams for two years and I have not been able to pass them.

In my opinion, I think I have not passed the exams because they have cultural and linguistic biases, the current content and pedagogy assessments are designed for monolingual English speakers, and the testing method falls short because it does not measure the actual ability of the teacher. In addition, the data has not shown that passing these tests signifies that one is a competent teacher.

In this light, these tests are NOT culturally relevant, inclusive and fair for people who have not had English as their first language and who work in immersion or dual immersion schools, as the primary language being used is not English.

On the other hand, I think that the law that regulates the teacher licensing process in Minnesota is unfair, with loopholes, and discouraging for those of us who want this profession to be respected and valued within society. I still cannot understand that within a classroom there are teachers who have never taken classes in an educational program and have gone through all the process that this implies like any profession.

At this time, the law benefits and rewards this group of professionals by granting them unlimited renewals of their licenses and that for reasons of experience they can advance from Tier 1 to Tier 3. I wonder ... where is the equity, justice and professionalism for those like me who have been fighting for years within a system, following the law and enrolled in an educational program?

Once my last two-year renewal ends, if I don’t pass the content exams, I will lose my job as a teacher regardless of all the work I have been doing to get where I am.

Is this fair...? when the only thing I've been doing is submitting to the law, successfully completing teacher preparation, meeting the requirements demanded by the university such as practices, exams, edTPA, student teaching, classes and additional credits to be able to be a professional teacher.

I love my job and perform it with passion and professionalism, I have 12 years of experience working in Minnesota in the education sector, I have a Master's degree from the University of Minnesota (Teaching License in Elementary Education with a focus on Dual Language and Immersion), I have excellent evaluations from principals, districts and I am a leader in the student community; but if the bill (HF1376) is not approved, I will be expelled from the classrooms and very surely I will have to pay my student loans working in another field for which I do not studied. (This would be unfair and contradictory).

What will the new generations of future teachers who would like to be professional teachers think about this? Would they want to invest time and money if only teachers with experience will be able to be teachers?

What will the new generations who want to be professional teachers think about this time? Would they want to invest time, study and money if only with experience they could be teachers?

I support the bill (HF1376) and I believe that this bill for many teachers would be a light at the end of the tunnel and the experience and years of study and training that we receive in an educational program would be honored.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kind regards,

Hugo Barrios



April 5, 2021

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

I am writing to express my deep concern with House File 1065 and specifically lines 171.3 – 172.6. I work at Hiawatha Academies as the Academic Program Director, where I oversee our special education program. I know directly the immense adverse impact this legislation would have on Hiawatha's students and families. The dramatic reduction in the bill-back rate without off-setting revenue would have a significant detrimental impact on our ability to provide the programming our students deserve.

Hiawatha's student population, which is 99% students of color and 83% students receiving FRPL, currently receives less per pupil than their peers in district schools. This legislation moves more of the burden of funding special education onto our students, as the gap for the unfunded special education costs will impact our general operating budget. This bill will have a crippling effect on our programming like English-language Development and intervention programming.

As a charter network, we cannot capitalize on the economy of scales available to our neighbor districts to reduce special education costs. For example, Hiawatha Academies has developed specialized programming for students with more significant disabilities. As a small network, our relative costs for running this program are higher than comparable programs in our neighboring districts. Without the option of building cooperative educational settings with other charter schools and resistance from resident districts to entertain a placement in their districts, our only option is to run costly, but crucial programs that are necessary to ensure our students receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education.

The reduction of the cross subsidy puts us in the untenable position between meeting our moral and legal requirement to provide quality educational programming for students with IEPs and other key programming, like investments in strengthening our tiered intervention systems. Over the past several years, Hiawatha has invested considerable resources into adding interventionist roles. The scope of reduction currently proposed would substantially limit our ability to provide these interventions. Ironically, strong intervention programming are key to preventing the over-identification of students with disabilities.

I am sympathetic to the need to lower Special Education costs; I know that there are things that Charter schools can do to be part of the solution. However, this bill only passes the burden onto our students and families, by impacting the essential programming we are able to provide.

Sincerely,

Alex Gallagher
Academic Program Director
(715) 491-2135 | agallgher@hiawathaacademies.org

Growing Learners. Growing Leaders.

Hiawatha Academies | 3500 East 28th Street | Minneapolis, MN 55406
hiawathaacademies.org

April 7, 2021 HF 1065

To: Members of the Education and Finance Committee

From: Barbara DeVries

Affiliation: Home School Parent and Member of HSLDA

City of Residence: Hutchinson, MN

My name is Barbara DeVries. I am from Minnesota District 18A. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to HF 1065, which will require indigenous education in the core curriculum of private and home schools.

As a wife, mother of five, a homeschool parent, and former parochial school teacher I have much experience educating children. Education about indigenous peoples is already covered in state history, as well as literature, poetry, and music. There is no need for the politicians to feel as if they must enhance our learning with another law. Teachers and parents already understand the importance of teaching about the history of a land, the cultures and religions of various nations, the evils of genocide, and the ways in which our politicians have wronged indigenous peoples in the past.

As a citizen of Hutchinson, I have seen the statues and plaques and books around our town that tell of the battle at Library Square during the Dakota War of 1862 in which the citizens of Hutchinson were forced to defend their lives and their families against the Sioux tribe by building a stockade and a trench. Why was the tribe angry? Politicians had signed a treaty with them to provide an annuity, but they did not pay the annuity. The native tribesmen were hungry and had no way to provide for their families. Chief Little Crow is still honored in our town with a statue and a river and an archery club and a gun shop named after him. He was not an evil man, but he was a desperate leader who could not feed his people, because he was not given the provisions that were promised to his tribe.

As a citizen of Minnesota and the united states of America, I understand what it is to live in freedom. This bill wrecks of government overreach. Politicians don't get to decide what is taught in private schools or in private homes. Politicians don't have the authority to tell teachers and parents what is best for the students in their care. There is already too much of your influence in our public schools, and look where that has taken our country.

Parents and teachers are waking up to the actions you are taking to ruin our freedoms in education. We are all grateful that we have a record of the way that you are voting, and we are checking on those voting records.

I thank you in advance for voting to protect our freedom to decide what is taught in our private schools and in our homes. Vote NO on HF 1065.

April 7, 2021-HF 1065

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: MIAC, MCLA, CMAH, & CAPM.

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

The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, and Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage have the important role as state agencies to advise and inform elected officials about our constituent communities and their needs. Our Councils have united in the past to express our support for the 2021 Increase Teachers of Color Act (H.F. 217), and we unite once more to express our appreciation and offer further guidance on the Committee's omnibus to maximize its return on investment.

We would like to thank you for your consideration of the proposals in HF 217 and for your leadership in including almost all of its provisions. We applaud this historic and transformative bill for its significant investments in increasing the percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers in the state. We also acknowledge that the HF 1065 DE amendment adopts the crucial and comprehensive policy proposals that are needed to maximize efficacy in combating the persistent opportunity and achievement gaps that affect our communities. The combination of these investments and policy proposals will significantly improve the inclusivity of school learning and work environments and create a more equitable and representative workforce. This bill is historic for our state and country. If passed, the legislation would represent the most comprehensive approach in addressing the underrepresentation of BIPOC teachers in the country and would serve as a model for every other state in the union.

We would also like to make a recommendation on funding for the Collaborative Urban and Greater Minnesota Educators of Color (CUGMEC) grant program. We advise that the Committee adjusts the proposed over-investment in the expanded Grow Your Own Program (GYO) and redirect funding towards the CUGMEC program. More specifically, we support the proposal from the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota to decrease the GYO appropriation and increase the CUGMEC appropriation by \$1.5 million per fiscal year. We also support the draft amended language to the CUGMEC statute 122A.635 that the Coalition has drafted with widespread stakeholder agreement in response to the Office of the Legislative Auditor's (OLA) recommendations. Additionally, we hope your committee will hold an informational hearing with public testimony about the OLA report as there was no time to discuss the report in your committee when OLA presented their findings last month.

Thank you for your leadership in taking a systemic approach to addressing the severe and persistent shortage of BIPOC teachers. We applaud the efforts to lead the state and nation towards a stronger future and are proud of the leadership role this Committee has taken towards those ends. We urge you to continue this important work and ask you to prioritize your proposals in conference committee negotiations.

Sincerely,

Shannon Geshick | Executive Director | Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

Rosa Tock | Executive Director | Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

Sia Her | Executive Director | Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans

Linda Sloan | Executive Director | Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: April 6, 2021 and April 7, 2021; Bill Number 1065
To: Members of the Education Finance Committee
From: Andrea Roeger
Affiliation (ex. student, parent, advocacy organization):
City of Residence: Minneapolis

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to urge the committee not to add additional required courses that homeschool parents must teach. We already have a rigorous history program that I use with my children, so I do not see this additional mandate as necessary. Parents should have the freedom to discern which courses are best suited for their homeschool, and this is unreasonable governmental intrusion on both parents and private schools.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Andrea Roeger

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

April 7, 2021

Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
5 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Davnie and Members of the Education Finance Committee:

On behalf of the PACER Center and the Coalition for Children with Disabilities, I am writing to share our priorities in the delete-everything amendment to House File 1065.

We are grateful for the inclusion of the following provisions:

- Nonexclusionary disciplinary policies
- Elimination of dismissals for grades kindergarten through third
- Preventing use of prone restraint for all students
- Paid time for paraprofessional training
- Funded training opportunities for school staff on nonexclusionary disciplinary practices
- Special education funding
- Process and funding to support the recovery of students with disabilities from pandemic-related learning loss

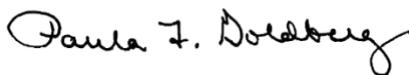
We are concerned about the following provision:

- Charter school special education tuition adjustments, which may adversely impact services that children with disabilities receive at charter schools

As we move to conference committee, we urge you to adopt the Senate language that starts on line 77.22 of the Senate File 960 delete-everything amendment. This language enables medically complex students to have access to a private nurse during school. This language is critically important to many families whose children have not been able to attend school with their peers because of disagreements with districts on allowing private nurses at school.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our priorities in delete-everything amendment to House File 1065. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure all students have access to a high quality education. Please contact Sarah Clarke at sclarke@hyldenlaw.com or 952-201-4654 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Paula Goldberg
Executive Director, PACER Center and Member of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities

Coalition for Children with Disabilities

The Arc Minnesota • Autism Society of Minnesota
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota • Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center
Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance • PACER Center
Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota • Proof Alliance

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: 04/07/2021 HF1065
To: Members of the Education Finance Committee
From: Kelly Noah
Affiliation (ex. student, parent, advocacy organization): Parent
City of Residence: Maple Grove

Thank you for your ongoing work to create educational infrastructure for all Minnesota children.

I write as a homeschooling parent in opposition to amendments to Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 120A.22, subdivision 9.

Instruction in four subject areas is currently required:

- (1) basic communication skills including reading and writing, literature, and fine arts;
- (2) mathematics and science;
- (3) social studies including history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship;
and
- (4) health and physical education.

The proposed amendment adds a fifth subject area: indigenous education.

I am not opposed to the teaching of indigenous education, and have specific fond memories of learning about regional indigenous peoples at ISD728 in the early 1980s. Our own children are being taught about the complexity of interactions among peoples across world history, including Minnesota over the past several hundred years.

I am opposed to extending the reach of legislature from dictating subject areas into dictating specific content. No other area of these requirements is that specific, and history is already required. Nonpublic schools should be afforded the flexibility to select appropriate content to meet their students' learning needs across the years without narrowing our lens to any one specific time or place.

If the goal of the revision is to ensure that public schools include indigenous education, there are other ways to ensure quality instructional content without including it in Subdivision 9.

Thank you.



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

Telephone: (651) 767-8149 Fax: (651) 290-8331

Date April 6, 2021

To: Rep. Jim Davnie, Chair
Education Finance Committee

From: Mary Gilbert Dougherty

Re: Omnibus Education Finance Bill (HF1065)

On behalf of the St. Paul school community and Board of Education I want to thank you and your committee for supporting public education as demonstrated by the House's substantial investment in E-12 education. Incorporating a number of school finance task for recommendations is much appreciated and puts Minnesota on a path to address the disinvestment in education that has occurred since the last recession. Increasing the general education formula and tying future increases to inflation are critical for districts to implement long term instructional strategies and student supports. We also appreciate the long awaited critical update to the English language learner formula and linking that to the formula. Providing more instructional time in small groups for both language acquisition and content is critical for career and college readiness for over 12,500 ELL students in St. Paul. Permanent funding for the VPK will permit us to enroll 266 four year old students in an all-day prekindergarten that has demonstrated results in preparing students for kindergarten.

We also support the provisions that reduce the special education cross subsidy and incorporate other efficiencies including maximizing Medical Assistance billing for all schools and charters and seeking reimbursement for all services provided in the IEP. Addressing the disparity in costs and tuition billing that exist between schools is also important and provides incentives to manage costs and eliminate inequities among disability areas.

Increasing the funding for Grow Your Teacher of Color is also timely as St. Paul is exploring expanding our efforts to recruit and train teachers of color which currently focuses on non-licensed staff with a bachelor's degree to offering a program that recruits our own secondary students to enroll in a high quality, affordable education partnership. This funding will also us to seek continued funding to maintain our successful Urban Educator Residency and add an option for St. Paul students to complete a bachelor's program and obtain a full license. Recruitment and retaining teachers of color is a priority voice repeatedly by our students and supported by the research.

There are many other provisions in this bill that provide support to families and student for both academic and social emotional support around the state.

The districts does have concern regarding the numerous unfunded mandates in the bill and we urge the committee to reconsider adding the physical education requirement at this time. Our students have advocated for an ethnic studies requirement instead and we will be piloting this course at two school this fall as an elective.

Again, I want to thank you for your focus and commitment to providing resources to Minnesota Schools.



April 5, 2021

Dear Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

Thanks for your hard work in developing an education bill that will support our youth in moving forward with their education after a year of distance learning and great trauma. Students are going to be struggling with their mental health and with academics. There is a need for teachers and school staff to have the best training on suicide prevention and trauma and to understand that the behaviors they see may be related to the impact of the pandemic on the students' lives. Thus, it is critically important that we promote alternatives to excluding students from school and that we support them to "catch up" on learning lost.

NAMI Minnesota supports many provisions on the bill, specifically the following:

- Promoting the use of nonexclusionary discipline policies
- Not suspending students in grades K-3
- Ensuring that students who are suspended can continue to have opportunities to learn
- Banning the use of prone restraints by anyone in the school
- Prohibit the use of exclusionary practices to address truancy
- Expanding the restrictions on the use of seclusion and restraints to all students
- Expanding funding for multitiered systems of support
- Requiring training of paraprofessionals, including familiarizing themselves with the student's IEP
- Increasing funding for school support personnel
- Expanding extended time revenue for pupils in children's residential treatment
- Addressing the impact of the pandemic, particularly the disruption of in-person education, on special education students. Extended school year, comp ed, additional IEP services can all be helpful to special ed students.
- Clarifying that the education around preventing suicide or self-harm must be evidence-based or approved by the commissioner.
- Funding the suicide prevention online program for teachers.
- Funding trauma informed schools

Again, we appreciate your efforts to address these important issues. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director



1919 University Ave. W., Suite 400, St. Paul, MN 55104
651-645-2948 | 1-888-NAMI-HELPS | www.namimn.org



Date of Hearing & Bill Number: Tuesday, April 06, 2021 and Wednesday, April 07, 2021, at 10:30 AM - HF 1065 Omnibus E12 Finance Bill

To: Representative Jim Davnie and Members of the House Education Finance Committee

From: Jon Millerhagen and David Adney (Executive Directors)

Affiliation: Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) and Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), respectively

City of Residence: Northfield, MN and Maple Grove, MN, respectively

April 6, 2021

Representative Jim Davnie
Chair, House Education Finance Committee
Room 443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155



Re: HF 1065 Omnibus E12 Finance

Dear Chair Davnie:

On Monday we had the opportunity to review the House Omnibus Education Finance Bill, HF 1065. The bill contains much needed support for E12 Education. The long-term aspects of the funding represent significant steps toward stabilizing funding in the future. The bill also represents the commitment of the House to E12 funding, and we deeply appreciate (and need) the proposed investments.

We continue to have significant concerns about policy provisions in the bill. The amendments to the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act as well as changes in the restrictive procedures statutes will make the management of student behavior more difficult for students, teachers, parents, and administrators. The K-3 suspension prohibition is particularly problematic. Also, we do not support the new mandates for mental health and bullying contained in the bill. We believe that the current language on these topics should not be changed.

We appreciate that you have modified the graduation requirements. Again, we caution that changes in electives always generates concerns among parents, students, and teachers.

We understand that the focus of your committee is finance and that the policy provisions were discussed extensively in the policy committee. Despite this, we must continue to assert that several policy provisions are a major concern to school principals and we will continue to raise those concerns as the bill moves to the floor.

We know the bill will be subject to amendments and compromises as this process continues. We look forward to discussing possible changes with you and your colleagues during that process.

Yours truly,

Jon Millerhagen

cc: MESPA Board of Directors, MESPA Membership

David Adney

cc: MASSP Board of Directors, MASSP Membership



April 7, 2021

To: Members of the House Education Finance Committee
RE: House File 1065, DE 1

Dear Chair Davnie and Committee Members,

Thank you so much for your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's students! We write to share our support for provisions in HF 1065, DE 1.

The Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, and, along with every other state and territory, is the largest network of legally based advocacy services for people with disabilities in the United States. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities. LSAP is the advocacy arm of Legal Aid and has provided legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid's clients and all low-income Minnesotans since 1977.

Thank you so much for your commitment to Minnesota's students and to making Minnesota's education system more equitable, as evidenced by the proposals in this bill. Our clients include low-income students, students who have disabilities, and Black, Indigenous, and students of color, all of whom face unique challenges in navigating and accessing our education system. We are grateful for the inclusion of many pieces in this bill:

Special Education Recovery Services (Article 5, Section 6)

Thank you so much for including this proposal! It will help ensure that students who have disabilities who struggled during the pandemic can get caught up and back on track with their peers. We have heard from so many families whose students are really struggling, despite best efforts by teachers and schools, and need additional support. This provision will go a long way to ensure that students have equitable access to recovery support.

Student Discipline Provisions:

Thank you for including so many changes to student discipline that will help end the racial disparities in student discipline that disproportionately keep BIPOC students and students who have disabilities out of the classroom. We are particularly supportive of provisions that would:

- End suspensions and limit expulsions for K-3 students (Article 2, Section 28)
- Require the use of non-exclusionary discipline practices before the imposition of most removals and dismissal (Article 2, Section 29, 33)
- Require minimum educational services during a suspension of at least five days and make it easier for students to stay caught up during dismissals, along with strengthening supports on readmission (Article 2, Section 31, 32, 34)
- Define and requiring reporting on Pupil Withdrawal Agreements and permitting students to continue to access school-linked mental health services following an exclusion, expulsion, or pupil withdrawal agreement (Article 2, Section 2, 27, 35)
- Strengthen discipline and removal policy planning, including affording more input in discipline decisions (Article 2, Section 38, 36)

Restrictive Procedure Provisions:

We are very supportive of many of these provisions, including:

- Banning the use of prone restraint and any physical holding that restricts a students' ability to breathe or restricts or impairs their ability to communicate distress (Article 2, Section 37). We are especially grateful that this extends to school resource officers—this is a key provision for the health and safety of students.
- Banning the use of restrictive procedures for students under 5 years of age and ensuring that racial disparities, the use of school resource officers, and other relevant restrictive procedures information will be reviewed quarterly by district oversight committees (Article 2, Section 56)

Paid Time for Paraprofessionals (Article 3, Sections 55-56):

Thank you for including paid time for paraprofessionals to review and understand the IEPs and educational needs of students who have disabilities. This is important for ensuring appropriate support for students who have disabilities and respects the important work that paraprofessionals do.

State Special Education Aid (Article 5, Section 4):

Thank you for your commitment to funding the important work of providing special education services to students who have disabilities.

Respectful Meal Practices (Article 8, Section 1)

Maintaining the dignity of students in the lunchroom is critical to social and emotional well-being and also ensures that hungry children will not skip meals for fear of shame or embarrassment around an inability to pay.

Thank you so much for your leadership and for advancing these significant proposals. We are grateful for your work and look forward to continuing to support these important provisions.



Maren Hulden
Staff Attorney



Jessica Webster
Staff Attorney

April 7th - **HF 1065**

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Eugene Piccolo, Executive Director

Affiliation: Minnesota Association of Charter Schools – St. Paul

On behalf of the Board of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and its members, I want to share a few comments regarding HF 1065. Our comments are not meant to ignore the scope of the policy and funding proposals in the bill but highlight a handful of issues.

First, we appreciate the additional resources for English learners, as over 20% of the 65,000+ students who attend chartered public schools are English learners.

Second, we appreciate the increase in the basic formula and support the proposed future inflation increase in the formula. General revenue is the heart of funding for the education of chartered public-school students since charter schools do not have access to local property tax revenues.

Third, we support the proposals to ensure that the curriculum of public schools reflect the contributions of indigenous and people of color, as over 50% of charter school students are of the global majority. We also support the proposals to diversify the education workforce (Teachers of Color) so that it is reflective of the changing mosaic of Minnesota's population.

Fourth, we support the proposals in Article 4 – Charter Schools. The proposal for school developers to do a Market Need and Demand Study is an important step in accountability. Equally important is the provision on Authorizer Corrective Action which penalizes the authorizer and not the charter school when the authorizer does not take action to improve its oversight procedures.

Fifth, we overall support provisions in Article 3 – Teachers the Grow Your Own, High School Pathways, mentoring programs, etc., and most of the provisions to update the tiered license system. However, we **do not support** the proposal to limit Tier 1 licenses to one renewal, **nor do we support** the requirement that a Tier 2 teacher with five years as a teacher of record be required to complete a teacher preparation program.

Finally, we do not support the overall changes in Article 5 - Special Education regarding charter school special education costs without additional funding. We did participate in a meeting late last week with the author, and appreciate that some of the changes suggested have been included in this bill. However, we believe that the best way to address the issue underlying the proposal is through a system of audits of high-cost programs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, with no recognition of individual situations.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some comments and a few concerns about provisions in HF 1065.



April 6, 2021

To: Chair Davnie and Members of the Education Finance Committee
From: Matt Shaver, EdAllies Policy Director

Re: Education Finance Omnibus (House File 1065 DE Amendment)

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.

There are a number of provisions in the omnibus bill that would advance educational equity, but there are also a number of measures—particularly around tiered licensure and charter school special education reimbursement—that would take the state in the wrong direction and negatively impact students. We urge the committee to reconsider the following provisions:

- Removal of 10 of 12 Tier 2 Licensure Pathways (Lines 110.2-112.4): The current tiered licensure system provides several pathways for individuals to obtain a Tier 2 license. The proposed changes would take the state in the wrong direction by removing 10 of the 12 pathways to receive a Tier 2 license, which would push high-quality teachers out of the classroom, demote some teachers to a Tier 1 license, exacerbate growing teacher shortages, and interrupt pathways to diversifying the teacher workforce.
- Removal of 30 day Timeline for Approving or Denying Tier 1 or Tier 2 license (Lines 109.32-110.2 and Lines 113.7-113.8): Statute currently has a clear timeline for approving or denying a Tier 1 or Tier 2 license, which provides transparency for districts and teachers—particularly those who are coming from out of state. Removing this clear timeline creates uncertainty and could create long wait times that prevent effective teachers from entering the classroom.
- Charter School Special Education Reimbursement (Lines 171.13-172.6): These provisions would radically alter the way special education funding works for students with disabilities whose families chose charter schools. These changes would benefit the bottom lines of a handful of districts at the expense of services provided to students with the highest needs in our state.

STUDENT-CENTERED PROVISIONS EDALLIES SUPPORTS

Here, we highlight several priorities from the education finance omnibus that we believe are most critical for student success.

- Expanding World's Best Workforce Measures (Lines 30.21-31.3): Each young person leaving our K-12 education system should have the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and forge the path to a rewarding career. For too many students—particularly those from historically underserved backgrounds—we are falling short. To remedy this, we need to make sure all students stay on track, and that schools ensure equitable access to rigorous courses, like Advanced Placement (AP), International

Baccalaureate (IB), Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), and concurrent enrollment. The inclusion of this provision would address this by gathering better data on student access and outcomes, infusing a stronger college and career readiness framework into World's Best Workforce goals.

- Expanding Rigorous Coursework for BIPOC students and students in greater Minnesota (Lines 87.4-88.3): 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, SF960 would invest \$5 million annually to expand access to rigorous coursework programming for students of color and other underserved populations.
- Improving Charter School Accountability and Quality Through Authorizers (Lines 157.31-159.2): High-quality charter authorizing is a critical component to ensuring that families have high-quality school options for their children. These provisions would increase transparency by creating a clear timeline for authorizers on corrective action, set guardrails for charter schools to have a better relationship with their authorizer, and raise the overall quality of charter authorizers.
- Nonexclusionary Discipline Grants (Lines 150.9-150.19): 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
- Leadership on School Discipline:The omnibus includes a number of provisions that would change Minnesota's approach to school discipline by improving school climate, strengthening parental involvement, and ensuring student due process. These are important first steps to addressing Minnesota's disproportionate rates of suspensions for students of color and students with disabilities.⁶ These provisions are the result of years of debate and compromise in legislative committees, community meetings, and beyond. We believe the discipline provisions in the bill represent strong, bi-partisan approaches that can advance meaningful progress on the issue, and we urge the committee to advance them.
- COVID-19 Recovery Services for Students with Disabilities (Lines 172.11-174.5): When schools closed in spring 2020, all students—particularly those historically underserved—were impacted. Gaps in internet and device access, varying levels of student participation, worries about mental health and social-emotional learning have left students and families concerned about the long-term implications. This is particularly true for students with disabilities. We support this provision because it would provide needed support and long-term planning for students with disabilities.
- Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Training Program (Lines 139.2-141.9): 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

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

credentials in their subject area. Through this partnership, 605 teachers from 196 districts across Minnesota have enrolled in the program.⁷ Given the benefits of concurrent enrollment, the Minnesota Legislature should reinvest in this program.

- Grow Your Own Program Grants (Lines 145.29-149.10): 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.⁸ We support this allocation because it creates more pathways into the teaching profession.
- Bachelor's Exemptions for World Language and Arts Teachers: We support the provisions in the omnibus that create Bachelor's exemptions for World Language and Arts teachers. This allows teachers from a foreign country or who have direct experience to be able to obtain a teaching license.
- Equitable School Funding and Compensatory Revenue: We support the improvements to compensatory revenue that lift the 80% poverty cap, ensuring that schools that serve high concentrations of students in poverty are able to use the appropriate amount of revenue generated by their students, keep more of the funds at the school site, and ensure funds are used for evidence based practices, including for the community eligibility provision.

We look forward to working further with this committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Matt Shaver
Policy Director
mshaver@edalliesmn.org

⁷ Kovash, J. (2020). "Regional Partnership: Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Training Program Report to the Legislature." Lakes Country Service Cooperative

⁸ 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.



April 6, 2021

The Honorable Jim Davnie
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

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

Thank you for your work this session to craft an omnibus K-12 education finance bill (HF 1065) that not only supports students and schools as they recover from the pandemic-related education disruptions but also provides measures to close opportunity and achievement gaps.

The Minnesota Business Partnership is grateful for inclusion of provisions in HF 1065 that will improve early reading instruction, increase teacher diversity, provide multiple measures to ensure students are on track for graduation, and expand rigorous coursework and career and technical education for BIPOC students and students in Greater Minnesota.

However, we have deep concerns about language in the bill that would reverse years of work to reform Minnesota's teacher licensure system but also, and most concerning, adversely impact teachers of color. We encourage the committee to stay the course on the current tiered teacher licensure system and NOT adopt the measures in this bill that would dismantle key components of the tiered system.

We are also concerned with provisions that would allow school boards to renew referenda by board action. While it is important to increase school districts' flexibility to make local fiscal decisions, we urge you to be cautious in adopting measures that would curtail the rights of taxpayers to provide input on local property tax matters.

Again, thank you for your work on an omnibus K12 education finance bill that supports students, families, and schools. We look forward to continuing to work with you on our items of concern as this bill progresses. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amy Walstien'.

Amy Walstien
Education and Workforce Development Director
Minnesota Business Partnership

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: HF 1065 DE1 Amendment
To: Members of the Education Finance Committee
From: Minnesota School Social Workers Association
Affiliation Advocacy Organization
City of Residence: Statewide

Please record your written testimony here and return this to sarah.burt@hosue.mn as an OCR compliant .pdf



April 6,2021

Dear Members of the House Education Finance Committee,

Minnesota School Social Workers Association greatly appreciates the House for including language in Article 5, Section 3 of HF 1065 related Federal Medicaid Reimbursement for School Social Work Services that are currently provided on an IEP or IFSP, funding for school support personnel, and funding for trauma-informed schools.

It is appreciated that the House has placed a priority on these bills as it works to decrease the number of students in our state who are under mental health distress as measured by a set of items on the Minnesota Student Survey. One of the strategies to accomplish this is to ensure student access to mental health services through schools.

Research indicates 18-20 percent of students have mental health issues significant enough to cause impairment to major life functions, yet only one in five receive the necessary services. Equally, the need for school mental health services has increased as school districts are facing the mental health consequences of COVID 19 and are challenged to equitably fund these vital life services.

One option to fund health related services in schools is accessing Medicaid, the primary payer for Special Education. However, Minnesota schools are failing to access these federal Medicaid funds; furthermore, schools are drawing down their educational funds to provide the services which adds to increasing their cross subsidy.

Throughout this process, our goal remains clear, and we will continue to pursue it. We believe that school social workers should be eligible for third-party reimbursement for mental health services they provide as part of an IEP/IFSP.

By including the language in Article 5, Section 3, that requires formal inter-agency work on this issue, we are hopeful that with this step the Legislature has at least taken will lead to resolution to ensure social work services provided as part of a child's IEP/IFSP will be reimbursed. We understand it can be difficult to merge the different medical and educational models related to Federal Medicaid Reimbursement. Informal discussions have gone on for several years without producing progress toward the goal of allowing third-party reimbursement for school social workers performing duties prescribed by an IEP/IFSP.

The amended language in Article 5, Section 3, does not specify a process by which stakeholders will be consulted and whether there will be a schedule of meetings and a defined list of stakeholders to be consulted on this matter. Given that we feel our voice has not been fully heard on this issue over the years, we want to make certain that school social workers' and special education administrators' perspectives are recognized in the discussions that will take place over the legislative interim.

All other health related services (including speech-language pathology, occupational and physical therapy, and school nurse services) have been successful in accessing federal Medicaid funds using the student's comprehensive evaluation and Individual Education Plan. School social work services are included under Minnesota statute as health-related services that can bill to MA, but our current practice in Minnesota does not allow for districts to bill these services.

Most school social workers are licensed mental health professionals. We believe the testimony we provided in the House Education Finance Committee and the House Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee outlined the value and expertise of licensed school social workers in meeting the social, emotional, behavioral, physical, and academic needs of students within both general education as well as special education settings. We look forward to continuing this discussion over the interim and into the 2022 legislative session.

Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa have this figured out! They do allow reimbursement for school social work services. Wisconsin generates \$8 million in federal reimbursement. Illinois generates an estimated \$15 to \$20 million annually. Michigan generates \$45 million. Minnesota only generates 3 million and its due to our current fractured system. We conservatively feel that over \$10 million is being left on the table each year that this does not get addressed.

In closing, Minnesota School Social Workers Association urges you to support the sections of HF 1065 that we have outlined and to further monitor the conversations between the Commissioners of Education and Human Services and affected stakeholders as they work toward allowing school social workers to qualify for third party reimbursement through Medical Assistance for services they provide to students with IEPs/IFSPs..

These bills will help to increase health equity, provide comprehensive school-based health services, help to fund, and support the governor's due north priorities and ultimately will generate (lost) federal funds into the state.

Thank you for your time and support of this critically important bill.

Sincerely,

Molly Fox MSW LICSW

Molly Fox MSW LICSW
MSSWA President

Christy McCoy MSW LICSW

Christy McCoy MSW LICSW
MSSWA Legislative Chair & SSWAA President

(optical character recognition)

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: Wednesday April 7, 2021 HF1065

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Shirley Volk

Affiliation (ex. student, parent, advocacy organization): Director of Student Services, Lakes International Language Academy

City of Residence: White Bear Lake, MN

I am the Director of Special Education and Student Services at Lakes International Language Academy, a public charter school in Forest Lake. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the current iteration of HF 1065 as it pertains to special education at charter schools.

In reviewing the House Education Finance Omnibus Bill, I am deeply concerned about the language contained under 166.20. This section threatens the future of Special Education services at charter schools in Minnesota, including Lakes International Language Academy. If this bill passes as written, resident districts would pay less and charter schools would be in the difficult position of covering more of the unreimbursed cost for providing special education services to local students with disabilities.

Parents choose to send their children to charter schools for a variety of reasons, and students with disabilities who attend charter schools deserve to have the same educational opportunities as students who attend schools in resident districts. School choice is a Minnesota original and deserves to be protected. This includes providing equitable funding for special education services to charter schools. Reducing special education funding to charter schools undermines school choice and ultimately, impacts the quality of education at both charter schools and resident districts.

This bill currently singles out and punishes charter school students by undercutting the ability of charter schools to provide quality learning opportunities for local students with disabilities. The bill as written will not save the state money or drive costs down. It also does not change the reimbursement arrangement between districts. It just shifts more of the burden of paying for special education services for students with disabilities to charter schools.

I am very proud of the Special Education program that we have at Lakes International Language Academy. As a charter school, we are consistently asked to do more with less, and every available penny of special education funding is put to use serving our students with disabilities. Any decline in special education funding would be damaging to our students with disabilities, forcing us to scale back services to match available finances and depriving these students of opportunities available to their non-disabled peers.

Please consider the adverse short and long-term impacts to local students with disabilities whose parents have chosen a charter school for their child's education if the special education provisions in HF1065 are allowed to remain as written.



April 7, 2021

Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
5 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Davnie and Members of the Education Finance Committee:

PACER Center has a long-standing history of supporting families of children and youth with disabilities, including those with mental health needs. Students with mental health challenges who struggle with social-emotional wellbeing rely on their teachers and support staff to help them stay at school successfully. Pre-COVID research reports that up to 20% of students have significant enough mental health issues to experience school disruption, and yet only one in five receive the necessary services and supports needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent educational disruptions as a result of this has caused many of our students to struggle to make educational progress, but the impact has been greatest on students with disabilities. Some went months without adequate services or support to sustain them academically and emotionally. Many lost access to their mental health support. Some students, especially those who are culturally diverse, are experiencing new or increased mental health challenges from this pandemic and the unequal access to education it has caused. Racial trauma and social injustice has also had negative impact on social-emotional wellbeing.

For students on IEPs or IFSPs, health-related services (including occupational and physical therapy, speech-language pathology and school nursing services) have been a vital source of support. Those services have successfully accessed federal Medicaid funds using the special education comprehensive evaluation process. School social work services are also included under Minnesota statute as health-related services that can be billed to MA, but Minnesota currently does not allow for districts to bill these services.

Schools have honorable intentions in providing access, instruction and support to all their students. Parents report to us that schools struggle to find resources that can adequately support their child's mental health needs. Often these children are given consequences for the behaviors that come from these unmet needs rather than given help.

We believe that allowing schools to use federal Medicaid funds to reimburse school social worker services is one way to broaden support for these students. Therefore, we urge you to include House File 945 in the House File 1065 delete-everything amendment so that Minnesota schools can access needed revenue to support these children and youth.

Thank you,

Renelle Nelson
Children's Mental Health and EBD Coordinator PACER Center

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: Wednesday, April 6, 2021 HF 1065

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Shenda Skalski

Affiliation (ex. student, parent, advocacy organization): Homeschooling Parent

City of Residence: Nashwauk, MN

I am opposing House File 1065.

House File 1065 would add indigenous education to the list of required courses homeschool parents must teach.

This is problematic because:

- It is an imposition on private schools, including homeschoolers, as they should decide for themselves what to teach. This is unreasonable governmental intrusion into the decisions that should be made by homeschooling parents and private school authorities.
- As indigenous history is part of Minnesota history, which many already teach, the additional mandate is unnecessary

Thank you for hearing our voice.

Sincerely, Shenda Skalski

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: 4/7/21; HF 1065

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From:

Karen E. Goodenough, MSW, LGSW, Executive Director, NASW – MN

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

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

Affiliation:

National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW - MN)

MN Coalition of Licensed Social Workers (Coalition of Social Workers)

City of Residence: State-Wide

Dear Chair Davnie and Committee Members,

On behalf of NASW - MN and the Coalition of Social Workers, **we are writing in gratitude for the work thus far on House File 945 that has resulted in the language in Article 5, Section 7, of the DE-1 Amendment of HF 1065 - special education social work services third party billing modified and encourage continued support.**

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. Collectively, our organizations offer expertise in providing mental health services in many settings. We strive to serve the whole child attending MN public schools and support this measure as a way to keep mental health services financially sustainable.

The social work licensing statute ([148E](#)) ensures professional standards are maintained within our field, including requirements for training and supervision for clinical social workers. In fact, HF 1495 - Uniform Service Standards, included in the Human Services Omnibus Bill (HF 2127), re-establishes Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (LICSW) as mental health professionals. We believe all social workers who complete the LICSW requirements ought to be reimbursed for their services regardless of their work setting, and school social workers with LICSW credentials are qualified to conduct the mental health services directed in student IEPs.

Social workers value equitable experiences for MN children, and we understand the rising costs of delivering special education services creates barriers to this goal. However, because these services are already being delivered by school social workers, the costs are unnecessarily borne by local school districts. Creating a user friendly and inter-agency compatible system will allow more funds to flow to MN public schools without extra burden to MN taxpayers. We encourage continued engagement with all stakeholders as you move forward with the next steps dictated in this bill.

Please support this measure within HF 1065. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Karen E. Goodenough, MSW, LGSW



Karen A. Frees, MSSW, LICSW



Jenny Arneson, MSW, LGSW

Geoffrey and Christina Davies

Lindstrom, MN

6th April 2021

Re: Testimony in Opposition to House File 1065

To Whom It May Concern,

We **oppose** that House File 1065 would require indigenous education to be added to the list of required courses that homeschool parents must teach.

We oppose this for the following reasons:

- This is unreasonable governmental intrusion into the decisions that should be made by homeschooling parents and private school authorities.
- This is an imposition on private schools and homeschoolers. We believe that we should have the freedom to decide for ourselves what to teach.
- As you are aware, indigenous history is part of Minnesota history, which we already choose to teach, so the additional government mandate is unnecessary.

Please reject this governmental intrusion into our decisions as parents and private school authorities.

Sincerely,
Geoffrey and Christina Davies

PRESIDENT	J. Michael Smith, Esq. CA, DC, VA
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OF COUNSEL	Mary E. Schofield, Esq. CA Tom Sanders, Esq. TX

4/6/2021

HF 1065

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Amy Buchmeyer, Staff Attorney at the Home School Legal Defense Association

City of Residence: Purcellville, VA

Dear Chairman Davnie and Members of Education Finance,

By way of introduction, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is a national organization with a mission to protect the fundamental constitutional right of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children. With over 100,000 member families, including over 2,000 in Minnesota, we are the world's largest homeschool advocacy organization.

I am writing to request you remove homeschoolers from HF 1065—specifically, the section in Article 2 that adds “indigenous education” to the list of required subjects that homeschoolers must teach. This is a burdensome and unnecessary addition to the required core subjects homeschoolers must teach.

Parents who choose to take full responsibility for educating their children say one of the greatest strengths of homeschooling is the freedom and flexibility it provides to customize each child's learning experience. But the more core requirements imposed on homeschoolers, the less freedom and flexibility exist to tailor an education to the child. Minnesota law already requires homeschoolers to teach core subjects such as math, science, and social studies. Adding any subject to the core requirements will impose further limitations on homeschoolers planning their school curriculum.

Furthermore, adding indigenous education as a separate category fits awkwardly in the current layout of the statute. Section 120A.22, subdivision 9 lists the core requirements for homeschool curriculum as basic communication skills, mathematics, science, social studies, health, and physical education. The statute then subcategorizes. For example, social studies includes history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship. But HF 1065 adds “indigenous studies” as a category akin to math and science, not a subcategory under social studies.



04/06/2021

Page 2 of 2

The addition is also unnecessary. Most homeschoolers teach “indigenous studies” as part of state history. The new category is not only awkwardly placed, but repetitive and unnecessary.

For all these reasons, I politely request you remove “indigenous education” as a category added to Section 120A.22, subdivision 9. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Amy Buchmeyer

April 5, 2021

The Honorable Jim Davnie, Chair
Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Ron Kresha, Republican Lead
Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
207 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Julie Sandstede, Vice Chair
Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
411 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Davnie, Vice Chair Sandstede, GOP Lead Kresha & Members of the Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) and our partners at Hunger Solutions Minnesota, EdAllies, and MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger are writing in strong support of Article 8 of the DE1 to HF1065 to prohibit lunch shaming in Minnesota.

As statewide anti-hunger advocates and leaders, we have engaged in healthy meal access advocacy for more than a decade. Students' stories of lunch shaming, lunch dumping, denial of diplomas and the right to participate in graduation, and other degrading practices such as low-balance stamps and stickers have been too numerous. These practices have no place in Minnesota's schools. We have worked tirelessly over the years to strengthen lunchroom protections for children with lunch debts or who lack money for school meals.

As we come closer to exiting this global pandemic, and thousands of Minnesota families are still reeling from unemployment and economic hardship, we must ensure that students are not facing new stresses and burdens about meal debt. These transactions and conversations must take place between adults.

The language in HF1065 (lines 189.12-192.34) clarifies that all school meals must be provided in a respectful manner by school staff and third party vendors. Maintaining the dignity of students in the lunchroom is critical to social and emotional well-being and also ensures that hungry children will not skip meals for fear of shame or embarrassment around an inability to pay.

We urge passage of Article 8 of the DE1 to HF 1065.

Sincerely,

Jessica Webster, *Staff Attorney, Legal Services Advocacy Project*
Steven Krikava, *Edina, MN & Board Member with MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger*
Matt Shaver, *Policy Director, EdAllies*
Colleen Moriarty, *Executive Director, Hunger Solutions Minnesota*

Dear Chair Davnie, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to advocate for policies that directly impact students and for taking the time to consider support for HF1065. My name is Kelly Caruth and I am an early childhood special education teacher who has worked for St Paul Schools for 17 years. I am also the mother to two middle school aged boys who attend Eden Prairie Schools. I was compelled to get involved in advocating for school funding because I have seen the disparities in school districts for years, but with the additional challenges brought on by COVID-19, I knew reform was more critical than ever.

I, along with other E4E members, support HF1065 because we know that schools are still struggling to make sure all students have access to the technology, learning space, and the support they need for in-person learning. Students across our state have had vastly different experiences this past year; with some being able to return to in-person early on, while others have yet to meet their teacher face to face. Even more troubling are the students who have not been able to access remote learning for a year now.

I commend you and thank you for including all 3 provisions of HF 1144 which will help reform and improve our state's poverty aid for schools. There has been a lack of transparency and accountability about how poverty aid has been used. Including the language from HF1144 will ensure that schools not only receive a higher percentage of the funds they generate, but also, remove an existing rule that caps a school's poverty level at 80%, even when a greater percentage of students come from households below the poverty level. The HF1144 provisions would also require more clear spending criteria and prioritize research-proven academic strategies that result in academic growth for students.

Another priority for me and my colleagues is increasing teacher diversity, especially in my field, the field of special education, where there is an even greater need. I am pleased to see that the omnibus bill includes the provisions from the 2021 Teachers of Color Act, but that is just the beginning of what we need in Minnesota. This legislation needs to go even further to help diversify our teaching profession. We need to be able to prioritize teachers of color and teachers in shortage areas in times of layoffs, and we need to increase access to high-quality alternative teacher preparation programs like grow-your-owns and residencies, and make the alternative certification program approval process more streamlined. It is imperative that students are able to see themselves reflected in their teachers and school staff.

Finally, I would like to speak to the issue of school discipline. I urge the committee to advance policies that are grounded in research showing increased positive outcomes in both learning and social-emotional development. Research shows that exclusionary practices do not work for either. Rather they can lead to learning loss and lasting harm for both the child and family.

As a professional that works with students with many social-emotional needs on a regular basis I know that building relationships with students and families and addressing the mental health needs leads to desired outcomes. I have also worked with families and students who have dealt with suspension first hand and the worry they carry about it happening again. I have also seen and experienced the mistrust it has perpetuated between families and schools. The use of exclusionary practices, with their history of racial disparities, make it clear to students, even at an early age, who is valued and who is not. Therefore, I support the provisions in this omnibus bill that help better define what non-exclusionary discipline is and ensure that reporting is solid and disaggregated in order to better see disparities by race. I also applaud the provision to

require the state commissioner of education to develop state SEL standards because this will help ensure that schools prioritize this during a time when returning to school will be tough for many families.

Again I want to sincerely thank you for your time and for your support of HF1065. With the implementation of these policies, we can begin to do the work of supporting all students and shrink the racial disparities that have only been exacerbated by COVID 19.

Sincerely,

Kelly Caruth, Early Childhood Educator, St Paul Public Schools, SPFE member, E4E member

Dear Chair Davnie, and members of the committee,

My name is Dawna Diamon. I have been teaching for over 10 years in various communities, countries, states, and settings. I currently teach in Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). I am a special education teacher who specializes in emotional and behavioral disorders. For the past two years I have had the privilege to work in MPS's Day Treatment program. This program is done in collaboration with Catholic Charities to support students and families who need intensive mental health support.

I'm also a member of a teacher-led nonprofit called Educators for Excellence which is made up of over 2,300 members in the metro area. I'm writing to testify on the house education finance omnibus bill, as this legislation will have real consequences on how I am able to teach and support students and other teachers in my building.

This past year has been difficult for everyone, but I have had a window into the homes of students. I can't begin to express how difficult it has been for students with mental health needs and the families that love them dearly. I want to thank you, and members of the committee, for proposing legislation that will positively impact our schools. Specifically I want to thank you for including provisions in HF 1144 that will improve compensatory aid to better serve students. This is a huge step forward to improve a system that is already in place, but ensure the funds are being received by school sites and students. I would implore you to make sure that students and schools in need receive the funding. This isn't a one-size solution for all schools or districts. Making sure funds go to students in need will ensure they have access to resources that wealthier districts and schools already have.

I also would like to thank you for the changes proposed to school discipline that will have a positive impact on our students. I want to thank you for centering evidence-based practices in line with these policies that will have the best impact on students from every background. When I'm able to have a restorative circle with a student rather than suspend them we all grow and learn. When I'm able to problem solve with a student rather than enforce rules we strengthen our relationship and our understanding of each other and future difficult situations.

I'm also thankful for the inclusion of the provisions of the Teacher of Color Act to expand teacher diversity. As we can all agree, expanding teacher diversity and creating pathways for a diverse teaching workforce will improve our students' experience in the classroom. The impact that having teachers of color is immense. When a child has a teacher of color their worldview is impacted. They see possibilities, equality, and opportunity for themselves or others.

However, I'm very concerned about the proposed changes to teacher licensure and ask you to protect tiered licensure as a vehicle for increasing teacher diversity in Minnesota . The current teacher licensure programs have been successful in diversifying the teacher workforce, and we should continue to capitalize on programs like this. I fully support uplifting the teacher profession as a whole, however improving teacher preparation programs should not come at the expense of undoing successful and beneficial teacher licensing programs that are in place.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and your commitment to serving our students and community.

Thank you,

Dawna Diamon (she/her), M.Ed., Special Education Teacher

Date of Hearing & Bill Number: Wednesday, April 0, 2021; HF 1065

To: Members of the Education Finance Committee

From: Dr. Rhonda Bonnstetter

Affiliation (ex. student, parent, advocacy organization): Minnesota Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (MACTE)

City of Residence: Slayton

Please record your written testimony here and return this to sarah.burt@hosue.mn as an OCR compliant .pdf (optical character recognition)

Dear Rep. Davnie and members of the House Education Finance Committee,

As the Minnesota Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (MACTE) executive council, we represent all 31 of the PELSB-approved higher education private and public teacher preparation programs in Minnesota. Our private and public universities and colleges prepare over 99% of the new teachers for Minnesota's schools each year, through a variety of program formats and pathways. Our deans, chairs, faculty and staff are highly engaged with school partners, MDE, PELSB and policy-makers to improve and diversify the teaching profession.

MACTE is supportive of all paths to teacher licensure that require candidates to meet the same standards required by our state's Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board. This includes traditional 4-year programs, non-conventional and alternative preparation programs, and the licensure-by portfolio-option. In each case, candidates are required to provide evidence that they have mastered Minnesota's high standards for pedagogy and content knowledge. MACTE is in support of HF 1065, and we are concerned about a change that was made from HF 950. We are not in support of the option for Tier 2 teachers who are filling a shortage area (which is currently nearly all fields in education) to move to a fully renewable Tier 3 license after teaching for 3 years without evidence of being placed on an improvement plan. Candidates seeking the Tier 3 license via this pathway have not evidenced meeting the teacher licensure standards set forth by PELSB other than by passing multiple-choice tests in content and pedagogy. This would appear to be in conflict with language on Licensing which states, "The board must not delegate its authority to make all licensing decisions with respect to candidates for teacher licensure. The board must evaluate candidates for compliance with statutory or rule requirements for licensure and develop licensure verification requirements."

Tier 2 teachers do not complete the board approved performance assessment nor do they have to show evidence of meeting PELSB teacher licensure standards. Only their building administrators have evaluated their performance, and those evaluations are rarely aligned to the standards for pedagogy and content knowledge, because all other fully licensed teachers have evidenced meeting those standards in order to obtain their professional license. This is especially problematic with specific statutory requirements that are required for other Tier 3 licensure pathways, but not for this pathway. Examples include specific requirements on teaching English Learners, knowing best practices in reading strategies in the candidate's content area, and teaching students with dyslexia.

Why would we allow a sub-set of potential teachers to have a lower bar for the same Tier 3 license?

- *We don't allow those seeking a driver's license to obtain their license by taking the written test and showing that they haven't had an accident in the last three years; they are required to pass a 'behind the wheel' performance assessment to show that they have met all requirements for that license.*
- *We don't allow volunteer tax preparers to obtain their CPA by showing that they haven't had a client who has failed an audit by the IRS in the last three years.*
- *We don't allow First Responders to become licensed emergency room doctors by showing that no patients have died while under their care in the last three years.*

While these examples may seem extreme, the education of our students is vitally important, and should not be left to those who have not shown that they have the knowledge and skills needed to meet the needs of our students. If the candidates do not wish to enroll in a traditional teacher preparation program or one of the alternative pathways to licensure, that is certainly up to them. With three years of successful teaching experience, they should have no problem documenting that they are able to meet the standards in pedagogy and content knowledge with the licensure by portfolio option. All of these paths provide evidence of meeting the PELSB standards for licensure. MACTE supports this change to the Tiered Licensure system so that all teachers holding a Tier 3 license will have met the high standards for teacher licensure that Minnesotans expect and our children deserve.

Thank you for your support of teachers and the teaching profession.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Bonnstetter, President, Southwest Minnesota State University

Kristin Conrad, Concordia University

Kyena Cornelius, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Stacy Ernst, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Chris Johnson, University of Minnesota Duluth

Cari Maguire, President Elect, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Athena Novack, Concordia University

Sonya Vierstraete, Southwest Minnesota State University