



March 28, 2023

TO: Chair Youakim & Members of the House Education Finance Committee
RE: HF 2497DE1

The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools finds that there is much to support in HF 2497DE1. We support the investments in Minnesota students by increasing the basic formula and then indexing it to inflation, to buy down the Special Education cross subsidy by 50%, and to buy down the EL cross subsidy up to 100% by 2027. We support the bill's investments in literacy with the Read Act, the Teacher of Color Act Grow Your Own incentives, and American Indian education are among the many positive investments and provisions in this omnibus bill. We also appreciate the inclusion of the charter school provisions, in particular the Market Need and Demand Study language which will help ensure that new charter schools are successful.

In reviewing the entire bill there are **four areas that we would ask the Committee to address as they relate to chartered public schools**. 1] Extended Time Revenue, 2] Computer Science Education Advisory Committee, 3] Student Support Personnel Aid, and 4] Special Education Due Process Revenue.

- **Article 1 Section 10:** While traditional districts can receive **Extended Time Revenue** funding of up to .2 of additional per pupil general revenue or \$1,023 per pupil, charter schools can only receive 25% or \$13.81 of the state average of extended time revenue generated by traditional districts. All of Minnesota's public-school students, including the 67,000+ who attend chartered public schools, and the majority of whom are BIPOC, should have access to the programming available through extended time revenue to meet their educational goals, make up learning loss, and have access to life changing educational opportunities no matter which public school they attend.

We request that the bill be amended to provide chartered public-school students with equal access to full extended time revenue.

- **Article 2 Section 58:** The **Computer Science Education Advancement Program** is a great opportunity to improve Computer Science education in Minnesota and we are supportive of its aim. Given that the state strategic plan for computer science education will apply to chartered public schools, and chartered public-schools educate about 7% of Minnesota students, it is important that chartered public-schools be represented at the table developing the state strategic plan.

We request that the bill be amended to add one representative from the MN Association of Charter Schools to the membership of the Computer Science Education Advisory Committee.

- **Article 5 Section 63:** We support the creation of **Student Support Personnel Aid** as many of our students would benefit from increased student support personnel being available to assist them. Our concern is for small chartered public schools. The funding formula for charters will prove to

be inadequate to match the intention of the legislation. For example, a small charter school with 140 students would only receive \$14,000. This would not be enough even to hire a part-time counselor, social worker, nurse, or chemical dependency counselor. Small chartered public schools should be treated like small traditional districts with baseline funding of \$50,000 to ensure they can hire personnel to match the needs of their students.

We request that the bill be amended to provide chartered public schools (which are districts for funding purposes) with the same baseline amount of Student Support Personnel aid as traditional districts.

- **Article 7 Section 4:** We support this important new **revenue for schools to provide Special Education Teachers** time to complete due process forms and procedures. Our concern is that the language ties this revenue to the employment status of a teacher by stating that only school districts and charter schools that have collective bargaining units would be eligible for this revenue. The Federal and State Sped requirements are mandated for all school districts; and charter schools are school districts for the purpose of special education. It should not make any difference what the employment status of a teacher is, because they are mandated by federal and state law to complete the same due process requirements.

We request that the bill be amended to clarify that Special Education Due Process Aid be provided to all Minnesota Public Schools and Special Education teachers.

On behalf of Minnesota's chartered public schools and our 67,000+ students, I want to thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

Eugene Piccolo
Executive Director
MN Association of Charter Schools