



February 17, 2021

Dear members of the Senate Committee on Education Finance and Policy, the House Education Policy Committee and the House Education Finance Committee,

On behalf of Educators for Excellence - Minnesota (E4E), a teacher-led nonprofit with approximately 2,300 members across the state, we are submitting the following written testimony on the Governor's proposed finance and policy proposal outlined in SF960/HF1065 (Chamberlain/Davnie) and SF788/HF950 (Chamberlain/Richardson).

E4E's members are united around a common vision of an excellent and equitable education system that offers all students the opportunity to succeed and that elevates the teaching profession. Our members are tireless advocates, seeking to make the bold changes our state's students deserve. Since the start of the pandemic, E4E members have focused their efforts on ensuring that our educational resources reach the students who have been most impacted by abrupt changes to teaching and learning.

E4E supports these initiatives in SF960/HF1065 and SF788/HF950 which will help build a more equitable and excellent education system in Minnesota:

- Prioritizing school resources for those that need it most by requiring 80% of compensatory revenue to be used at the school site.
- Setting a statewide goal for increasing the number of teachers of color and American Indian teachers and appropriating additional funding for Grow Your Own programs, educator career pathways and teacher mentorship programs.
- Investing in keeping students in school by reducing unnecessary suspensions and expulsions through the use of non-exclusionary discipline policies and restorative practices. We also support defining in-school-suspension as having missed half a day or more on in-class instruction, requiring non-exclusionary practices to be used prior to dismissal and requiring written notice to parents about dismissals.
- Initiatives to address pandemic-related learning loss by allocating funds to community partnerships, expanded access to tutoring services, and mental health supports for those who need it most, especially historically marginalized groups.

While there are a number of positive provisions in both bills, E4E is opposed to these provisions in SF960/HF1065 and SF788/HF950:

- Changes that alter eligibility for a Tier 2 teaching licensure which restrict pathways for diverse teachers to get into classrooms; under the proposed changes in SF788/HF960, a candidate could teacher for six years on a Tier 2 license and secure multiple successful evaluations, but no longer have a straightforward pathway to stay in the classroom.

Additionally, we urge committee members to consider these further changes:

- Requiring compensatory revenue to be used on evidence-based practices that demonstrate increased student achievement and eliminating the poverty cap which harms schools with high numbers of free and reduced-price lunch students.
- Further restricting suspensions on students in grades K-3.

We look forward to working together in a bipartisan manner to advance important education policy and funding priorities in a year when our students need critical resources.

In partnership,

Paula Cole
Executive Director
Educators for Excellence