

June 2, 2025

Dear Members of the E-12 Education Finance Working Group:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in regard to the E-12 Working Group Agreement. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) is responsible for licensing 110,000 teachers in Minnesota, establishing the state standards required to be a licensed teacher, and overseeing the state's nearly 700 teacher licensure programs. This biennium PELSB is seeking a modest operations increase to cover negotiated staff salary increases and expert reviewer costs for the licensure via portfolio pathway. Without these operations funds, PELSB faces a 10% reduction in staff, putting our ability to process teaching licenses within the 30 days required by statute in jeopardy. Additionally, our ability to review and process portfolio applications will be severely limited, hurting teachers and districts seeking alternative pathways to address the teacher shortage.

In addition to funding operations, PELSB is seeking funds to continue supporting heritage language educators. With the funding received last biennium, PELSB was able to support a cohort of 50 heritage language educator through the licensure via portfolio process. This past year, we licensed the very first Karen language teacher in the nation. Students testified this year to the incredible impact heritage language teachers have on them. Without the small increase sought to the heritage language program, we will effectively have no funding to continue this work. We believe students deserve teachers who reflect and celebrate their language and culture, so we ask for your support in keeping this program alive.

The current E-12 Working Group Agreement includes funding to support and enhance our online licensure via portfolio platform. While we certainly need these funds, they do not supersede our basic needs to operate as an agency. PELSB urges the committee to reallocate these funds to operations and the heritage language program to ensure we can effectively fulfill our duties.

PELSB remains dedicated to serving Minnesota's teachers and students. We ask for your support to continue this work.

Sincerely,



Yelena Bailey, Ph.D.

PELSB, Executive Director



Angela Osuji, Ph.D.

PELSB, Chair



June 2, 2025

Chair Mary Kunesh, Senate Education Finance Committee  
Co-Chair Ron Kresha, House Education Finance Committee  
Co-Chair Cheryl Youakim, House Education Finance Committee

*Sent via email only*

Thank you all for your work in developing a fair and balanced education budget that keeps our youngest Minnesotans in mind. The Working Group's agreement includes funding that preserves the progress made in 2023 for school-based early care and education programs. I appreciate that this budget agreement both continues base funding for several school-based early learning programs and the funding to support early childhood teachers.

Schools operate early learning programs often at a deficit and supplemented by their own General Funds to meet the needs of their communities and to build early and positive relationships with the families they will serve for years into the future. This is especially true for voluntary prekindergarten programs that only receive funding to support a partial day for four-year-olds, despite families often needing full day programming. It has also been a challenging time for Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) programming as the age 0-4 population declines, further stretching local budgets. Ensuring schools continue to receive inflationary increases for both programs helps them to continue offering services to families at current levels.

Additionally, I appreciate the inclusion and redirection of the Early Childhood Teacher Shortage grant to DCYF. There is a particular need for this funding to support the school-based early childhood programming our agency oversees. Both the early childhood license and parenting education license are recognized by the Professional Educator Licensing Standards Board (PELSB) as teacher shortage areas across the state. We continue to hear that districts cannot find enough parent educators or licensed early educators with over half of districts not reporting a licensed parent educator in 2024. Maintaining funding for this program will allow progress to continue to be made to meet districts' and families' needs for early childhood licensed teachers.

Any loss of early care and education opportunities for children and families is a loss to our entire state. Maintaining the progress we collectively accomplished in 2023 is critical. I greatly appreciate the Working Group's work and support of the programs that support our youngest learners.

Best,

Tikki Brown, Assistant Commissioner  
Department of Children, Youth, and Families



June 2, 2025

Dear Members of the Minnesota House and Senate E-12 Working Group:

Legal Aid appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Working Group's "Final Agreement" regarding education policy and finance.

We do not see any language that reverses the ban on seclusion for children in grades kindergarten through third grade, and we are hopeful that the Legislature will honor that decision in a special session.

It is impossible to overstate the gravity and danger of seclusion, the trauma it causes for children, and the long-term adverse impacts on a child's psyche, well-being, and future ability to learn. This is a practice the Minnesota Disability Law Center argues is a form of torture and a violation of human rights.

**Seclusion should never be offered as an option to schools and families, just as Minnesota no longer authorizes administrators to request permission to paddle or hit children as corrective discipline.**

Seclusion is not a "sensory room." Seclusion rooms are registered with the State; they must be at least 6 feet by 5 feet and ventilated. The rooms must be empty and the child is locked in the room or blocked from exiting (otherwise the restraint does not meet the definition of "seclusion" under state law). The Disability Law Center has represented children injured and traumatized by the practice of seclusion; some children we represent soil themselves or self-injure as a way to escape the isolation.

Countless reports by state and federal government agencies, education policy organizations, health providers, media watchdogs, and civil rights groups have demonstrated that seclusion seriously harms children and staff (see attached resources). The practice of seclusion is banned in Minnesota's juvenile detention facilities in the interest of protecting the health and safety of youth and workers.

In close coordination with the Minnesota Restrictive Procedures Workgroup, the Minnesota Department of Education recommended an urgent end to seclusion in all grades last year. Any effort to restore seclusion runs contrary to hundreds of hours of work and flies in the face of credible research and expertise and experience of Minnesota educators, parents, advocates, and health professionals.

Modern day best practices regarding discipline, co-regulation, de-escalation, positive behavior interventions, and the compassionate treatment of children do not include seclusion and solitary confinement. Children with disabilities who are dysregulated are often trying to communicate unmet needs to adults. These critical moments are opportunities for skill

development, and such learning cannot occur where a child is over-powered and forced into a small, locked room alone against their will.

Alternatives to seclusion:

- Quiet, calm spaces with fidgets and sensory toys
- Co-regulation in a room with a caring adult
- De-escalation practices with caring adults, including talking and game
- Trained, trusted adults experienced in positive behavior supports

We implore the Minnesota Legislature to honor its 2023 commitment to urgently end seclusion for our youngest learners and for all grades statewide as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Jessica Webster  
Staff Attorney  
Legal Services Advocacy Project

**Impact: Restraints on Children**

<https://minaretfoundation.com/2022/07/11/impact-restraints-on-children/>

**Restraint and seclusion: How policy has failed to curtail the use of dangerous practices in US public schools.**

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/restraint-and-seclusion-how-policy-has-failed-to-curtail-the-use-of-dangerous-practices-in-us-public-schools/>

**Disability Discrimination: Discipline, Restraint, and Seclusion**

<https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws/disability-discrimination/disability-discrimination-key-issues/disability-discrimination-discipline-restraint-and-seclusion>

**Action Steps from Settlement Agreements between the U.S. Department of Justice and School Districts Ending the Use of Seclusion**

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/sped/restr/res/PROD082381>

**Federal Data and Resources on Restraint and Seclusion, Government Accountability Office**

<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-19-418t>

**National Ban on School Use of Seclusion and Restraint of Students Introduced in Congress**

<https://www.propublica.org/article/national-ban-on-school-use-of-seclusion-and-restraint-of-students-introduced-in-congress>

**Trauma of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools, Association of University Centers on Disability**

<https://systems.aucd.org/docs/APRAIS%20talking%20points.pdf>

**Dangerous Use of Seclusion and Restraints in Schools Remains Widespread and Difficult to Remedy: A Review of Ten Cases**

<https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Seclusion%20and%20Restraints%20Final%20Report.pdf>

**Promoting Alternatives to the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools, US Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA**

[https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/topics/trauma\\_and\\_violence/seclusion-restraints-1.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/topics/trauma_and_violence/seclusion-restraints-1.pdf)

# Seclusion - Protect our Children

K12 Education Workgroup  
June 2, 2025

Dear Chair Youakim, Chair Kresha, Chair Jordan, Chair Kunesch, Chair Cwodzinski, and Education Working Group Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the 2025 Working Group Agreement. We understand the difficult task the K-12 Education working group has had to stay within budget, while focusing on the needs of our children in Minnesota. Thank you for your work.

We, as Solutions Not Suspensions, are writing to share our continued concerns over any attempts to repeal the K-3 seclusion ban. Now seeing the final language of the K12 workgroup, we are optimistic that we can say that the K-3 Seclusion Ban has been able to stay in place for another year. However, we are still concerned that there still may be attempts to undo these protections.

Seclusion is solitary confinement for children, when they are most in need of support. It is a practice that is disproportionately used with our Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. Also, seclusion is exclusively used on children with disabilities. This practice is blatantly harmful, and targets our most vulnerable.

The immense psychological and physical damage seclusion causes our children is not worth the risk of its use. Seclusion has no educational value, and continually pushes our children out of their classrooms, therefore taking away valuable learning time.

We need to see a Minnesota where the well-being of our children, and their education, are being valued. When we allow practices like seclusion, we are saying to our children that their mental health, education, and physical safety are not guaranteed. Our children with disabilities deserve dignity and respect, and to seclude them is more than just harmful, it's traumatizing. Seclusion is a tool that needs to be removed from our education toolkit in Minnesota.

We hope that this body keeps in place the current K-3 Seclusion Ban, and protects our most vulnerable children in Minnesota. Please, we have to do what's right for our children. We should not repeal what has barely had a chance to work. Districts, schools, and educators need additional support to keep children in school, and the solution is to provide those needed resources, and develop creative solutions. Not harm our children. We cannot go backwards. We urge you to give our children a chance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erin Sandsmark  
Executive Director  
Solutions Not Suspensions



June 2, 2025

**Dear Education Finance Working Group Chairs and Members,**

On behalf of Pillsbury United Communities, thank you for your continued leadership and deep investment in Minnesota's students. As a charter school authorizer grounded in equity, accountability, and community empowerment, we appreciate the complex work of balancing fiscal constraints with the urgent realities facing our public education system.

We are closely tracking the final agreement's provisions on compensatory revenue, including the one-year hold harmless for FY2025 and FY2026 and the creation of a Compensatory Revenue Task Force. As an authorizer of schools serving historically excluded communities, including students of color, multilingual learners, and families experiencing poverty, we know firsthand how critical this funding is to advancing educational equity.

Compensatory revenue enables our authorized schools to provide services that are otherwise unfunded: culturally responsive instruction, trauma-informed support systems, extended learning time, and robust family engagement strategies. For schools already working to close systemic opportunity gaps, a temporary funding guarantee is a necessary floor, but long-term predictability, stakeholder inclusion, and equity-centered design must guide the work ahead.

As the Legislature begins the task force process and broader funding reforms, we respectfully urge you to:

- Ensure charter school authorizers and leaders are included in any task force or advisory process;
- Recognize the diversity of governance models within public education and design funding structures that reflect the real conditions of schools serving concentrated poverty.
- Maintain the original intent of compensatory revenue as an equity strategy, not a performance-based reward, nor a mechanism for redistributing funds away from high-need students.

At Pillsbury United Communities, we work to ensure the schools we authorize are deeply responsive to their communities and held to high standards. That work requires stable, adequate, and equitable funding, aligned to the scale of need our schools are built to address. We remain committed to partnering with you to advance policies that close gaps, not widen them.

Thank you again for your commitment and for keeping equity at the center of these decisions.

In pursuit of opportunity for all,

**Pillsbury United Communities**



June 2, 2025

TO: Members  
Education Finance and Policy Working Group

FROM: Nick Klaseus, President  
Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation

RE: Working Group Proposal on Special Education Transportation

The Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation would like to voice its criticism of the provision in the final agreement of the Education Funding and Policy Working Group that proposes to cut approximately \$43 million over the next biennium (approximately \$15 million in FY 26 and an additional \$28 million) in aid to pay for transportation costs specified in the Individual Learning Plans (IEP) for students identified as needing special education services. While appearing to be less than what was proposed in the Governor's budget, this decision will increase the costs at the local school district level that will be only partially absorbed by special education cross-subsidy aid.

Special education transportation costs are driven almost exclusively by the prescribed services laid out in a student's IEP. Post-COVID, a greater number of students need extensive services that often require individualized transportation that result in added costs. Other costs are also escalating due to labor market shortages and the fact that school bus contractors are not eligible to receive state reimbursement for unemployment costs for bus drivers laid off during the summer months. It is too early to determine if and how Federal trade policy will affect the price of vehicles for both school districts and school bus contractors. All of these factors contribute to rising transportation costs and reducing the revenue stream school districts rely upon to pay for the transportation of students with special needs will negatively impact school district budgets.

Transportation of students with special needs will likely be on the agenda of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Special Education that is authored in the Education Funding and Policy Working Group agreement and the Minnesota Association for Pupil Transportation looks forward to providing insight on this and other issues that commission will be addressing in its work.

For further information or comment, contact our lobbyist Brad Lundell at [lundelllegislative31@gmail.com](mailto:lundelllegislative31@gmail.com) or 612-220-7459





June 2, 2025

TO: Members  
Education Finance and Policy Working Group

FROM: Jessie Kember  
President, Minnesota School Psychologists Association (MSPA)

Sarah Wollersheim Shervey  
Legislative Chair, Minnesota School Psychologists Association

RE: Comments on Provisions in Working Group Agreement

The Minnesota School Psychologists Association would like to take this opportunity to provide its perspectives on several provisions in the Education Finance and Policy Working Group agreement that was released last Thursday and finalized on Friday.

- MSPA strongly supports the inclusion of the working group on Developmental Delay in the final agreement. This provision has been one of MSPA's top priorities during the 2025 legislative session.
- MSPA supports the creation of a Blue Ribbon Commission on Special Education that is included in the agreement. As personnel who are often highly involved in the determination of a student's eligibility for special education services, MSPA welcomes the opportunity to share its expertise with this panel.
- MSPA is concerned with the reduction in revenue distributed through the Student Support Personnel Aid program. Given the tight budget constraints the Governor and Legislature faced this session and will likely be facing through the next biennium, it is not unexpected that some programs would face reductions. At the same time, the presence of student support personnel in schools throughout Minnesota lag well behind other states and reducing this revenue stream will not improve that situation.
- While not a reduction for this biennium, the proposed cut of \$1 million per year to the Student Support Personnel Pathways program for fiscal year 2028 and fiscal year 2029 will not help Minnesota produce the trained student support personnel needed to meet student needs.

MSPA fully understands that difficulty the Governor and Legislature faced this year and it grateful to have been given the opportunity to share its perspectives on a number of issues. There are language items related to some of the provisions mentioned above and MSPA may have comments on those items when the bill language is made public. As the special session continues, feel free to contact our lobbyist Brad Lundell at [lundelllegislative31@gmail.com](mailto:lundelllegislative31@gmail.com) or 612-220-7459 if you have questions or comments.

**Written Testimony of Don Gemberling**  
**Minnesotans for Open Government (MnOG)**  
**K-12 Education Working Group**  
**June 2, 2025**

**Originally sent to House and Senate leadership on May 30, 2025**

In the 2023 session the legislature created an Office of Inspector General in the state Department of Education (“Ed OIG”) to investigate a variety of things including fraud in government programs. (Minnesota Statutes Section 127A.21.) The classification for the data associated with these investigations as “not public” is under the general Civil Investigative Data section of the DPA, Section 13.39. This provision does establish that at some point civil investigative data become public, with a clear threshold determination of when the civil investigation is “inactive” (and thus, the data are “public”).

Last week, MnOG became aware of an amendment to the Omnibus Education Bill proposed by the Governor's office, which has a number of serious problems. Chief among those problems are the following:

The amendment creates a new and highly restrictive classification of Ed OIG data. Under the amendment language, and contrary to current treatment, the 13.39 threshold determination about when an investigation is “inactive” has been removed, making it unclear when the investigative data would become publicly available. Also, the fact that an investigation is taking place could not be confirmed unless the Ed OIG concluded it would not interfere with an investigation.

The amendment would also make the Ed OIG subject to Section 13.82, the law enforcement data section of the DPA. MnOG views this as causing additional confusion, given the overlapping, new classification. In addition, the amendment would create some peculiar consequences by making the Ed OIG a law enforcement agency.

MnOG asks the legislature to closely examine the effects of this amendment on the ability of the public to understand why a state agency, that already clearly has problems with doing its work at rooting out fraud and waste, should be able to hide much of its work from the public and the legislature. To make a statement in favor of transparency, the legislature should hold public hearings on this amendment.

MnOG also calls on the Governor to explain why his office is proposing this amendment and the public purpose rationale for it. He should also explain why the amendment is being proposed late in the session and behind closed doors. Early in his administration,

Governor Walz made strong statements that the work of his office would be highly transparent. This amendment, and the process of bringing it to the legislature, is in direct opposition to those statements.

Don Gemberling

Spokesperson

Minnesotans for Open Government (MnOG)



June 1, 2025

K-12 Education Working Group

**Subject: 5/28 K-12 Working Group Final Agreement**

Dear Chair Youakim, Chair Kresha, Chair Jordan, Chair Kunesh, Chair Cwodzinski, and Education Working Group Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on the 2025 Working Group Agreement. We appreciate the difficult task the K-12 Education working group had in finding a way to meet the budget targets.

We are writing to express concern about the **Special Education Tuition Charter School Adjustment Aid** and **cuts to charter school long-term facilities maintenance**. Charter schools play a valuable role for special education students in Minnesota, often offering alternatives that better meet the needs of students with disabilities. We are concerned that these cuts will result in fewer options for Minnesota students.

We are also concerned about the **reductions to special education transportation**. We understand the concerns about rising transportation costs, but we worry that these cuts may mean the difference between a student having a transportation aid, allowing more flexible schedules, or providing transportation for a special education student who is open-enrolling to another district. Reducing transportation funding means reducing options.

We are curious about the decision to include funding for the **Developmental Delay Working Group**. Given the massive education cuts required this year, this seems a very strange thing to prioritize. It does not make sense to us to place a higher priority on funding for this working group than on teacher recruitment or retention, school libraries, or building maintenance. These things are desperately needed by schools. A Developmental Delay working group is not. We would urge you to reconsider this decision.

Finally, although we have not seen the final language of the policy bill, **we are hopeful that the ban on seclusion in grades K-3 will remain in place**. The state of Minnesota took an historic step forward when it passed ban in 2023. Our organization, and many others, were deeply concerned when we learned of efforts to repeal that ban, especially when the process was proposed through a floor amendment and not given any formal hearings.

Seclusion is the solitary confinement of children when they are most in need of support. It is a practice that is disproportionately used on students of color, and is used exclusively on students with disabilities in Minnesota, and is therefore blatantly discriminatory.

There is overwhelming evidence<sup>1</sup> showing the psychological and sometimes physical harm that can be caused by seclusion, which resulted in the death of a student in the state of Virginia as recently as last November. Rather than rolling back the ban or creating exceptions, we should be talking about how to support students through co-regulation, dysregulation, and sensory strategies. There is no doubt in our minds that we will look back on the practice of seclusion with the same lens we consider corporal punishment today: a barbaric practice that has no place in our schools.

We hope the legislature will uphold the K-3 ban and continue to work towards eliminating it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Multicultural Autism Action Network

Fatima Molas

Delia Samuel

Rufo Jiru

Maren Christenson Hofer

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[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.copaa.org/resource/collection/662B1866-952D-41FA-B7F3-D3CF68639918/UnsafeCOPAAMay\\_27\\_2009.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.copaa.org/resource/collection/662B1866-952D-41FA-B7F3-D3CF68639918/UnsafeCOPAAMay_27_2009.pdf)

<https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities/Stopping-Harmful-Practices/Restraints-and-Seclusion-Schools/>

<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.journals/umialr71&div=27&id=&page=>

<https://wisconsinexaminer.com/2024/03/18/seclusion-and-restraint-use-in-wisconsin-schools-whats-being-done-about-it/>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/how-to/how-physical-restraints-and-seclusion-pose-serious-risks-to-mental-health/articleshow/102361540.cms?from=mdr>

<https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Seclusion%20and%20Restraints%20Final%20Report.pdf>

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-09-719t.pdf>

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## Written Testimony to the Conference Committee on the Education Omnibus Bill

Submitted by Dr. Kim Gibbons, Director  
Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI)  
University of Minnesota

Chairpersons and Members of the Conference Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the education omnibus bills currently under consideration. I serve as Director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota. On behalf of our entire team, I want to begin by expressing how deeply we value our partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the opportunity to serve Minnesota's students, schools, and families.

CAREI brings deep expertise in *educational research, assessment, and the science of scaling evidence-based practices into real-world educational settings*. While the University of Minnesota is home to some of the nation's top education researchers, CAREI exists specifically to bridge the gap between research and practice—to translate what works in theory and apply what works for teachers and students every day in real schools. In Minnesota we have done this work as part of the statewide COMPASS network implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) since 2020, and in 2024 we were charged with implementing part of the READ Act in partnership with MDE. Being written into the READ Act was not just a recognition of our expertise—it was a vote of confidence in our mission to ensure that every child in Minnesota has access to effective, evidence-based literacy instruction.

We recognize the difficult budgetary decisions facing the state this session, so I am not asking for any new funding. I respectfully ask the committee to preserve two elements of current Minnesota law that enable CAREI's work in Minnesota::

1. The ability to continue the READ Act partnership with MDE through June 2027 using remaining funds. If this is not possible, please consider allowing us to expend funds through June 2026 as originally proposed. This will allow us to finish the intervention review and have a smooth transition with MDE.
2. Continued involvement of CAREI in the statewide Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) initiative through COMPASS.

These requests are not about expansion—they are about completing what we've already started.

Currently, the Senate Omnibus Bill eliminates funding to CAREI for statewide implementation of MnMTSS, which is retained in the House version. At the same time, the House Omnibus Bill eliminates the CAREI READ Act partnership as of June 2025, and removes our ability to spend remaining funds through June 2026—despite this being the original agreement.

In effect, each bill cuts a different, yet essential, aspect of the statewide infrastructure needed to support districts in implementing the READ Act. Without reconciliation, we risk undermining the entire system of support designed to help schools deliver on the promise of literacy reform.

Approximately \$2 million remains from the original allocation to CAREI. If allowed to continue, these funds would sustain our work for an additional two years. Dividing this amount among 500+ districts would provide minimal benefit. But preserving the infrastructure that delivers implementation expertise, research-aligned tools, and evaluation capacity statewide? That is the kind of strategic investment that ensures the state's \$100 million literacy reform yields real, measurable results.

CAREI's unique role in this partnership includes:

- Identifying and evaluating high-quality instructional interventions;
- Developing and applying assessment tools to support continuous improvement;
- Providing research-based guidance to schools through a strong MTSS framework;
- Supporting the scaling and sustainability of best practices statewide.

This work does not duplicate what districts are doing—it enables and strengthens it. And it does so with fidelity, equity, and efficiency in mind.

Sustained statewide impact requires more than good intentions—it requires state-level infrastructure to support implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement. No individual district, no matter how committed, can build or maintain that on its own.

We need only look to Mississippi for proof. Over the past decade, Mississippi has become a national success story in reading improvement—not because it passed a law once, but because it invested consistently in implementation supports: coaching, training, data systems, and a strong state-district partnership. Despite being smaller in both population and geography than Minnesota, Mississippi has allocated more long-term state resources to build and sustain the systems that improve literacy outcomes.

Minnesota has a similar opportunity—but only if we preserve the infrastructure already in place. CAREI's role is to work with MDE to provide that backbone: the research, tools, training, and evaluation capacity that local districts need to succeed.

Finally, CAREI has spent the past five years deeply embedded in the COMPASS initiative. We have partnered with MDE to build the systems, tools, and relationships that districts rely on. Continuing our role ensures that this momentum continues—not from scratch, but from strength.

In closing, I urge the committee to retain CAREI's involvement in both the READ Act implementation and MTSS work through the original timeline of June 2026. These requests cost the state nothing new but preserve the critical infrastructure needed to make this once-in-a-generation literacy investment successful. State dollars are more critical than ever with uncertainty in research funding from the federal government.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the children of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Gibbons", followed by a stylized flourish.

Dr. Kim Gibbons  
Director, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement  
University of Minnesota





To Members of the 2025 Minnesota House/Senate K-12 Education Working Group :

We – educators, students, parents, business and community people from all over Minnesota - write to strongly support and thank you for your decision to include in your conference committee report, two measures that build on the insights, creativity, strengths and energy of young people. Specifically

- \* Extending the ability to Minnesota Department of Education to expend the previously allocated innovative service-learning funds

- \* Support for the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs STARS program

There is [extensive research, summarized by University of Minnesota professor Andrew Furco, about the multiple values of combining classroom work and some form of community service](#). These programs have positive impacts on student achievement, attitudes toward being an active citizen, learning more about possible careers and helping young people develop a positive attitude about what they can accomplish.

Many articles focus on problems of youth both before and since the COVID 19 Pandemic. Unquestionably some youngsters suffer from depression and other issues.

However, historically high Minnesota graduation requirements show that there are many young people who have strongly and skillfully rebounded from challenges.

Based on research cited above, we think part of progress in Minnesota will be building on the creativity, strengths, insights and energy of young people.

Thank you for recognizing this.

Sincerely

Saad Ali, student leader in district 834.

Dr. Joan Arbisi Little, Licensed Minnesota Public School Administrator, Career Pathways

Karl Baur, MAAP STARS State Officer, Fergus Falls

Paula Beugen, Community Leader, Golden Valley

Kyle Chen, Student at Eagan High School

Karin Ciao, Member of Minnesota Bar for 20 years

Nate Christen, North Minneapolis English Teacher

Nancy Dana, Minnesota Public school Administrator, teacher, parent, 50 years in education

John Day, University of Minnesota, Duluth faculty, retired

Tina Fahnestock, MSCCC- Retired 40 year Public Schools Speech and Language Pathologist

Mindy Greiling, former member, Minnesota House, Roseville

Patti Haasch, Retired public school principal, Bemidji

Jim Hart, M.D. – practiced medicine in Stillwater Area for 40+ years

Larry Johnson, US Military Veteran and Retired Educator, Golden Valley

Daryl Kehler, Director of the Northfield Area Learning Center

Tammie Knick, MSW, LICSW, School Social Worker  
DREAM Technical Academy/Technical Academies of Minnesota

Elsa Kohl, General Education Teacher at Empower Learning Center, Hinckley, MN

Senator Jane Krentz (1993-2003), Former Director of McVay Youth Partnership, Hamline University  
Former Elementary Teacher – MoundsView

Katie Kunz, ELA, Insight School of MN, Brooklyn Center

Cade Kuznia, Civically Minded Youth, Howard Lake

Jaiden Leary, student, St. Louis Park High School

Steve Lear, Financial Planner and Literacy Advisor, 40+ years, Minneapolis

Courtney Leyden, Human Resources Manager at CHOICE Technical Academy, Owatonna

Owen Litecky, student, Northwest Passage High School, Coon Rapids

Peg Lonquist, former teacher, former Education professor, Hamline University

[John Mannillo, 50 years in Saint Paul as a Real Estate Developer and RE Broker. In\\$ight St. Paul and St. Paul STRONG organizer.](#)

Eric Swan McDonald PhD, Science Dept. Northfield ALC, '22-'23 Northfield Public Schools  
Teacher of the Year, 2024, Rice County Prevention Champion

Mark Meier- Willmar, Dream Technical Academy Work Based Learning, college and Career Readiness, PSEO coordinator. Over 23 years of teaching experience in two different states

Burke Murphy, Educator, Goodhue County educator  
Steve Murphy, parent and grandparent of 7 students of public education.

Joe Nathan, Founder, former director, Center for School Change, now known as Catalyst for Systems Change

Maitreya Reeder, student at St. Anthony Village Senior High

Khalique Rogers, Executive Director, Catalyst for Systems Change

Dr. Bryan Rossi, former public school teacher and administrator

Christine Salokar, Science, Fergus Falls Area Learning Center

Rob Shumer, Community faculty Metropolitan State University

Dane Smith, public policy consultant and commentary writer

Doug Thomas, former board member, LeSeur-Henderson Board of Education, former public school teacher, Henderson

Christopher C Thompson, Alternative Education Teacher for almost 33 years  
Teacher, Norse ALC - North Branch, MN

David Tilsen, former Minneapolis Public School Board member

Scott, Tryggeseth, Educator serving at-risk youth for 30+ years, ISD 196

Kristin Tuel, MAAP STARS Co-Chair, alternative education teacher 27 years, Fergus Falls ALC

Brandon Wait, Principal / Executive Director, Paladin Career & Technical High School, Coon Rapids

Bob Wedl, former Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner, former Executive Director of Planning and Policy for the Minneapolis Public Schools retired.

June 2, 2025

Dear Chairs and Members of the Education Finance Working Group,

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Minnesota's students as the education finance agreement takes shape. I'm writing on behalf of Community School of Excellence (CSE), a public charter school serving a predominantly Southeast Asian, multilingual, and low-income student population in Saint Paul.

We are grateful that the final agreement includes a hold harmless provision for FY2025 and FY2026, ensuring that schools receive no less compensatory revenue than in previous years. At CSE, compensatory revenue is not supplemental—it is foundational. These funds support targeted academic interventions, language access, mental health services, and culturally affirming programming for our students, 87% of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and 99% of whom identify as Asian, including many refugee and immigrant families.

Like many schools serving historically marginalized communities, we are working to close persistent opportunity gaps reflected in academic proficiency rates. These figures should not be used to question the value of compensatory funding—but rather to deepen our understanding of the complex, essential roles schools like CSE play in supporting the most disenfranchised families. Compensatory revenue is what allows us to meet those challenges head-on.

We appreciate the Legislature's decision to convene a Compensatory Revenue Task Force to study longer-term reforms. As that process begins, we respectfully request:

Charter school representation on the task force, particularly from schools serving historically underserved communities;

- Advance notice and modeling of potential formula changes to ensure schools like CSE can plan responsibly;
- A continued focus on equity as the guiding principle behind compensatory revenue, recognizing the layered needs of schools serving high concentrations of multilingual learners and low-income families.
- Finally, we thank you for including temporary site-based spending flexibility, which will allow schools to transition responsibly under a changing formula structure.

We appreciate your willingness to engage with the real impacts of this funding on the ground. CSE stands ready to be a partner in shaping a fair and effective formula that meets the moment—and meets the needs of every student.



**Bao Vang**  
Chief Executive Officer

## COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

June 2, 2025

Dear Chairs and Members of the Education Finance Working Group:

Thank you for the opportunity to share reflections from the Coalition for Children with Disabilities on the 2025 E-12 education finance agreement.

We recognize that this session presented real constraints: *competing priorities, limited resources, and deep divides around how best to support students and educators*. We also appreciate the difficult choices you were asked to make and the work it took to find consensus in a complex environment.

That said, we continue to hold the belief that inclusion cannot wait. While some short-term protections were secured, we remain concerned that the final agreement did not meaningfully advance the long-term stability, access, or dignity that children with disabilities deserve in our public schools.

### Areas of Concern:

- The **\$28.7 million reduction to Student Support Personnel Aid** undercuts the mental health and behavioral supports that so many students — particularly those with disabilities — rely on to access learning. We understand the budget pressures at play, but this remains a critical gap that will have real classroom consequences.
- The establishment of a Blue Ribbon Commission on Special Education and a Compensatory Revenue Task Force **may offer space for further conversation**, but we urge caution in treating them as solutions. In our experience, commissions and working groups can serve as useful tools — or as mechanisms for delay. We hope these spaces will be shaped by transparency, urgency, and meaningful community involvement.
- We are particularly mindful of the **\$250 million in future special education cuts** signaled in the tails. We understand that this figure may be a placeholder, but its presence reinforces the need for vigilant, community-informed planning going forward.

### Looking Ahead to 2026:

As we move into the interim and begin planning for 2026, we remain hopeful that the next session can more fully center the inclusion of children with disabilities — not through fragmented workarounds, but through strong, systemic policy action.

Specifically, we look forward to working with legislators to:

- Restore **Student Support Personnel Aid**, which remains a foundational need for ensuring access to general education settings and behavioral health support.
- Invest in **de-escalation pilot grants** that support staff in preventing and responding to behavioral crisis without reliance on restraint or exclusion.
- **Protect and expand access to the least restrictive environment**, especially for students of color and English learners who face compounded barriers to full inclusion.

We appreciate the steps taken this year and understand the political and fiscal constraints at play. But we cannot lose sight of the fact that inclusive education is not optional — it is a civil right. Our coalition stands ready to collaborate, problem-solve, and continue building toward a future where every student, in every school, has the opportunity to belong, participate, and thrive.

### In solidarity and shared commitment to inclusive education, CCD

Autism Society of Minnesota • The Arc Minnesota • Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota • Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance • Minnesota Council on Disability Multicultural Autism Action Network • PACER Center Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota • Proof Alliance



June 2, 2025

TO: Members of the K12 Education Working Group  
FROM: Dr. Aqueelah Roberson, on behalf of Education Evolving  
RE: K12 Finance Working Group Agreement

We are writing to express our concern over an item in the budget this workgroup submitted on May 28, 2025. We understand this budget is a necessary compromise, but believe the same dollars already allocated to licensing Minnesota teachers can be put to better use.

Education Evolving is an education nonprofit that promotes transformational student-centered designs for learning. We have built a close partnership with PELSB over the years as we have advocated to open licensing pathways and improvements for educators throughout Minnesota. Most recently this has included the Heritage Language licensure.

The current budget does not include needed operational funding for PELSB and, of the four priority items the agency requested, only funds the last: line 36, Licensure via Portfolio Online Platform. This item is only intended to make improvements to the existing online platform. While those improvements would be helpful, in our efforts to assist aspiring and current educators through ease of usage, this is the agency's lowest priority. **We urge you to reallocate the funds instead to PELSB's general operating budget.** Under PELSB's current budget, they are not able to fill several critical positions, and existing staff are having to work unsustainable hours to process current licensing needs. By increasing funding to the online platform, PELSB will receive more licensing requests, but will not have the staff to process them.

We would love to see Heritage Language, Portfolio Licensing, and the online program receive additional funding to continue expanding these successful programs, but understand that keeping our teaching licensing board funded must be our number one priority.

We deeply appreciate all the hard work you all have done over this session as well as your partnership. We understand that there are many necessary cuts and fully trust the good will and partnership of the members of this working group.

Dr. Aqueelah Roberson, Policy Director  
Education Evolving

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Finally, as someone who has gone through the academy as an AP and became a principal the following year, I attribute my growth and development these last few years to MPA. As a result, I am now a principal at the state's second largest district and ONLY Somali / East African / Hijabi Muslim woman Principal in our district.

Please reconsider removing funding as it will impact many like me. I could not have registered without the supported funding, and I hope you will take this into consideration!

Hibaq Mohamed  
Principal  
Highland Park Middle School  
St. Paul Public Schools

The Minnesota Principal's Academy (MPA) has an over 16-year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

For the past two years, I have been part of the Minnesota Principal's Academy. I have been able to learn and deepen my understanding into how to become an exceptional leader for my school and my community. I am the principal at Riverview Spanish/English Dual Immersion, part of Saint Paul Public Schools and I am on my third as the leader of this school. MPA has helped me to gain a better understanding on systems, patterns, history and about all the multiple moving pieces that we deal with on a daily basis. All this to move our students further and be able to close the achievement gap. I have created a network of administrators across the Twin Cities that I can reach out for support. This Professional Development is carefully thought and planned to foster reflection as a leader, and provides continuation and support for two years, this provides the opportunity for leaders to reflect on our first units, how we have changed our perspective and how to continue to move forward.

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.
- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).
- Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.

I thank you in advance for your consideration to continue supporting school principals through Minnesota Principal's Academy.

In Partnership,  
Stivaliss Licon-Gervich

I am writing to you to reconsider cutting the funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy. I get that funding is tight right now and it may seem like an easy and quick way to save costs. However, having been through the Minnesota Principals Academy and having been a school principal, I can assure you that this professional development is sorely needed.

The Minnesota Principal's Survey has stated repeatedly that Principals feel isolated and do not have time to invest in themselves. They also show that they want to be instructional leaders but are often pulled to do managerial tasks. The Minnesota Principals Academy gives Principals the tools and strategies to be effective leaders. It gives them strategies to reflect and be strategic thinkers and problem-solvers. I know Principals who go through this two year professional development journey are better instructional leaders and have more to give to their teachers, students, and families in their community.

Cutting the funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy is a mistake. The funding does impact students. Research shows that Principal Leadership matters and does impact student outcomes. The Principalship is a tough job and if Minnesota wants to continue to be leaders in education they need to support Principals which in turn supports teachers and students and families. I hope you and Minnesota



legislatures realize the huge impact the Minnesota Principals Academy has and will continue to fund this important professional development for the educational leaders in our state!

Thank you for taking time to read this email,

Debra Prenkert, Ed.D.

I am writing to respectfully ask that you reconsider the proposed elimination of funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA).

MPA has a proven, 16-year track record of providing principals across the state with what they consistently cite as the most useful and relevant professional development of their careers (Kemper et al., 2024). Since its inception in 2008, MPA has enjoyed consistent bipartisan support for good reason: it equips school leaders with the tools they need to lead schools that are academically rigorous, humanizing, and engaging for both students and staff.

I personally participated in MPA, and I can say without hesitation that it has made a lasting impact on my leadership. The insights, reflection, and tools I gained through the program continue to shape my decisions and approach. Because of MPA, I am a stronger, more thoughtful, and more effective leader—and that difference is reflected in the culture and outcomes of our school. The ripple effects of this investment are real, not just for principals, but for our students, teachers, and communities.

Removing funding for MPA at a time when principals face unprecedented pressure sends the wrong message to those of us working every day to lead our schools through complex challenges. More than ever, principals need support, connection, and ongoing learning.

Here are a few additional points I hope you'll consider:

- According to the Minnesota Principals Survey, principals consistently report having far less time for professional development than they would like. When asked about the most valuable PD they've received, MPA consistently ranks at the top.
- In the 2023 survey, Minnesota principals reported a decline in self-confidence across 47 of 49 leadership responsibilities (Kemper et al., 2024)—highlighting the urgent need for continued investment in their growth and support.
- MPA is one of the few education programs with a long history of bipartisan legislative backing. As Grissom et al. (2021) noted, "It is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership."
- MPA's value extends beyond the participants themselves. Through Action Learning Projects and alumni leadership roles, MPA contributes to the broader educational community across the state—supporting current principals, superintendents, teacher leaders, and future school administrators.

At a time when the role of the principal is more critical—and more complex—than ever, this modest investment is one of the most meaningful ways we can support the future of our schools.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to public education.

**Cindy Andress**

**Principal, Minnewashta Elementary**

I just got some awful news. Minnesota Principals Academy funding was cut in the latest budget agreement. For each year of the Minnesota Principal Survey, Minnesota Principals Academy was identified as the most impactful professional development for principals. Research clearly shows the impact a high-quality principal has on student achievement across the school. I have sent principals from my district to Principals Academy every year I have been an Assistant Superintendent.

There is no greater dollar-for-dollar investment Minnesota could make in its schools. Not only is cutting this funding counterproductive, but it also sends a terrible message to our schools' principals. Please use your voice to help change this devastating decision!

Peter Mau ([he/him pronouns](#))

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.
- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).
- Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA

Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Dr. Jen Wilson (she/her)  
Roseville Area High School Principal

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I have personally participated in MPA and as a principal for over 22 years, I can honestly say this is the most valuable and collaborative professional development I have been a part of during my career. This professional development has allowed me to grow as a leader to support our staff and students. Your investment in leaders of school buildings and districts sends a message that you value our development as educators and the work we do. I respectfully ask that you include this in your funding bill. Please reach out to me if you have questions or need an advocate to get the dollars necessary to invest in our building leaders.

Regards,  
**Mark Randall**  
**Principal**

I hope you are well, and I apologize for emailing you on the weekend. I am Levi Lundak, a current Principal in Rochester Minnesota. I am emailing regarding the recent news of Minnesota Principals Academy, and the loss of funding for the program in the next biennium. I am asking you, and your committee, to reconsider this decision. I will provide some additional points below from a prepared message, but I feel you need to hear from me directly, not simply a message from a list serve asking us all to email you a specific message!

I went through the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) in 2021-2023 in an outstate cohort based in Austin. I have been a part of other professional development programs that have been wonderful, just like MPA. With that said, I have never had one so directly impactful to the work I do on a daily basis as that of MPA. In the changing world of policy, education, and the intersectionality of those points (regarding behavior, the Read Act, Mental Health, and changes from the Federal Government), it is

imperative in my mind that opportunities to develop leaders through MPA is still a piece of what we believe in Minnesota. We have identified significant training needs for teachers through the Read Act, and not supporting similar training for Administrators (though on a much smaller scale) would be incongruent in thinking at the leadership level.

I know I have benefitted from MPA, and have been using those experiences and learning in implementing new changes in our schools here in Rochester. The specific example of implementing the READ Act has been quite pertinent. So many staff did not think we needed such a change, and staff (teachers) really do not like to be told what to do. I used multiple lessons from MPA to help them understand the moral imperative by creating the need for change (Unit 1 of MPA), through helping them develop the understanding of what learning truly is through the Science of Learning (Unit 4 of MPA), and into implementation of research based practices that our state has implored us to complete (The whole arc of MPA). Here in Rochester, who has invested in sending Principals to MPA, we have been successfully implementing the READ Act, and I know we are ahead of other districts in doing so thanks to the understanding by our leaders.

Please help us as Principals continue to lead, and support MPA.

Should you have any questions, please let me know!

I have included the more formulating advocacy statement below, but all the words above are my own.

Levi Lundak

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et. al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008.

At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession.

I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I participated in MPA in the latest cohort from 2023-2025. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience as a leader to collaborate with colleagues doing the job, be guided by those who have expertise in the area of leadership, and have time in our busy days serving students and caregivers to analyze practices in our schools and implement research based practices to move our schools forward.

I am imploring you not to cut funding to this important program that focuses on the leadership of the principal and the impact it has on the success of our schools.

Sincerely,

Nichole Bergerson

Assistant Principal

It saddens and frustrates me to see the proposed funding cut to the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA).

As a former participant in MPA, I know the value and impact of this learning for principals in not only improving daily practices, but in developing leadership skills to impact systems change for the benefit of students and families. The role of principal is complex, unique, and often isolating. MPA creates a space for learning, action/implementation of learning, and connection/collaboration.

The Minnesota Principals Survey clearly exposes the experience and needs of school leaders. Eliminating funding for MPA dismisses this data and ignores what the research tells us about the role of principal.

Because we all care about MN students and families, I urge you to reconsider this decision. An investment in MPA is not only an investment in school leaders, it is an investment in creating an engaging, purposeful, and rigorous school experience for students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cathryn Peterson, Principal

White Bear Lake Area Schools ISD624, Central Middle School

4857 Bloom Ave., White Bear Lake, MN

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I am just finishing my two year cohort of MPA in Rochester. It was one of the most valuable experiences I have had. It provided much needed and often neglected professional development for myself as a leader. This by far will be the most effective learning I have done. It has already helped me in so many ways to be able to have research based conversations with my staff. I want more principals to benefit from this experience. Please do not cut funding for this program.

Sincerely,

Amy Hughes

Elementary Principal

I'm writing today to urge you to continue funding the Minnesota Principals Academy. I am set to complete my two-year journey with the Minnesota Principals Academy in the Twin Cities this June. The thought that my cohort could be among the last to benefit from this exceptional program is deeply concerning and disheartening.

Being a school administrator is one of the most isolating and demanding roles in education. Often described as servant leadership, it requires supporting students, staff, families, and the broader community—frequently with little time or opportunity to invest in your own learning and development.

The Minnesota Principals Academy has provided some of the most impactful professional learning I've ever experienced—surpassing even the coursework I completed to earn my administrative license. The learning, collaboration, and networking it offers reinvigorated my passion for school leadership and reaffirmed my commitment to a role that is both challenging and often thankless.

Minnesota has long been recognized as a leader in education. Our principals play a pivotal role in driving school improvement and student achievement. Please continue to invest in those who lead our schools. Cutting this program would be a significant step backward for education in our state.

Additional Data for You to Consider:

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.
- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).

- Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support.

Sincerely,

Danielle Beck

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession.

I am just wrapping up my two years of participation in the Minnesota Principals Academy, and am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers. As an assistant principal, still early in my administrative career, this professional development has been truly invaluable for me and my fellow participants as we continue each of our journeys in this ever changing profession.

I am asking you to please reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Thank you so much for your time,

--

Jennifer Benson

Assistant Principal

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure

that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Becky Suttan  
Principal  
Central Park Elementary

My name is Julian Stanke, and I am the proud Principal of Birch Lake Elementary School in White Bear Lake Minnesota. I am in my 5th year as a school administrator. Previously, I was the proud Assistant Principal of South St. Paul Middle School, and now in my second year in the White Bear Lake Area Schools. Both communities mean so much to me, and that is because of the students, staff and families that I get to serve each day.

As a new Principal, I have looked forward to participating in MPA as a way to grow my ability to serve my students and staff, and advance as a valued member of our greater community. Cutting this funding would remove a valued resource that many of my colleagues have been able to participate in. Ensuring that our educators at all levels are supported in their continuous growth only benefits our students and our greater community. When Educators have the opportunity to grow, that directly impacts our students and their lives, both immediately and in the future.

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Thank you for your consideration and urgency to support our educational leaders.

Julian Stanke

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16-year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of the MPA has had bipartisan support since its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I urge you to reconsider the elimination of this modest



investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing, and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Don't hesitate to contact Dr. Katie Pekel, the program's exceptional administrator, if you have further questions or require additional information about its success.

Sincerely,

Matt

--

**Matt Hillmann, Ed.D.**

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et. al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I participated in the Minnesota Principals Academy early in my principal career. It was hands down, the best professional development I have ever received as a principal. Principal leaders from throughout the state trained us in every aspect of our job highlighting research, best practices and concrete advice. In addition, I met some fantastic colleagues who, to this day, I call on regularly for consultation and perspective. I am most certainly a better principal due to the Minnesota Principals Academy and I ask you to find a way to keep it in the budget.

Please continue to support principals. Our leadership greatly impacts our communities, students, teachers and families.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Lightner

I am writing to urge you to consider elimination of funding for the Minnesota Principal's academy. Now more than ever our school principals need the high quality training that this academy provides. I participated in this program over the last two years and the learning has been invaluable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Heather Willman

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Molly Huml

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I had the privilege to participate in the Austin cohort of the MN Principals Academy that concluded in 2023. The ability to learn research-based best practices alongside other principals was instrumental for me. I had the chance to implement things that made last changes in my school and in my district. Cutting funding from the MN Principals Academy would have a negative effect on the principalship in MN.

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.
- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to

2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).

- Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.
- Being able to connect with, and learn from, other principals that have opened new schools, and then share my learning around opening a new school through my Action Learning Project was instrumental in my development. I have been a principal for 16 years, and the MN Principals Academy was the best professional development I have participated in.

--

Jared Groehler

*Principal*

*Overland Elementary School*

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I was fortunate enough to spend the last two years in this program. This program increased my knowledge of how to be an effective leader and gave me time to implement and discuss ideas with others working in the same position. The networking and sharing of ideas were invaluable to me as a new lead principal. I have encouraged other principals to partake in this amazing learning community. There truly isn't anything like it to build leaders that build stronger schools and outcomes for students. Please reconsider cutting the funding for this program.

Laura Yehlik

Principal Pine City Jr/Sr High School

[To the Members of the Education Finance Committee,](#)

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the proposed elimination of funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA)—a program that has not only transformed my leadership, but quite honestly, reignited my purpose as an educator.

I am just now completing my two-year experience with the Academy, and without question, it has been the most impactful professional development I've had in my 22 years in education. That includes the work I've done to earn my B.A., M.A., and Ed.S. degrees—none of which came close to matching the depth, relevance, and transformational nature of the MPA experience. This program has elevated not only my skillset as a principal, but also my ability to lead with courage, clarity, and an unwavering commitment to students and staff.

Cutting funding for this program is deeply concerning—especially given what we know from the Minnesota Principals Survey results from both 2021 and 2023. In both surveys, principals report that they spend far less time than they would like on their own professional development, and overwhelmingly cite the Minnesota Principals Academy as the most useful development they've received. Additionally, the 2023 survey showed a troubling decline in principals' self-confidence in 47 out of 49 responsibility areas (Kemper et al., 2024). If ever there was a time to double down on meaningful support for school leaders, it is now—not to walk away from a program that directly addresses the leadership challenges we face every day in schools.

MPA is not just an investment in individual leaders; it's an investment in the collective leadership capacity of our state. Through our Action Learning Projects, participants contribute tangible solutions and shared knowledge for other school leaders to build upon. MPA alumni don't just lead buildings—we lead districts, serve as superintendents, mentor new administrators, shape state policy, and model the kind of instructional leadership Minnesota students and teachers deserve.

The Minnesota Principals Academy has long had the rare distinction of enjoying bipartisan legislative support since its inception in 2008—an acknowledgment that the role of a principal is one of the highest-leverage positions in education. The research is clear. As Grissom, et al. (2021) affirmed: *"Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership."* (p. xvi).

This program has made me a better leader. A better listener. A more informed advocate for equity and excellence in my school. And through that, it has positively impacted the lives of the children and families I serve. Please do not take that opportunity away from the next generation of principals and the communities that count on them.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful reconsideration of this decision.

With deep gratitude and urgency,

**Katie O'Connell**

Principal

Watertown-Mayer Elementary School

I heard over the weekend that the state funding was cut for the Minnesota Principal Academy. As an elementary principal in my 9th year as an administrator, that is difficult to swallow. Being a principal is a rewarding job that is complex and challenging. So many of my colleagues have left the field due to the high workload. The MPA is one place that several colleagues have attended to boost their energy back into the profession.

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I hope you can reconsider.

With gratitude,

**Meghan O'Connor**

Principal, Lyndale Community School

It has been brought to my attention that funding for MPA has been cut from the Education Bill. This is so incredibly disheartening to hear that I'm writing this from MSP airport while waiting to board a flight.

I am a MPA graduate and can tell you firsthand that this opportunity shaped not only who I am as an Assistant Principal, but also how I was able to secure my position.

I hold a Masters in Special Education, a Masters of Science, and have obtained both my Special Education Directors and K-12 Principal Licensure's. While my educational journey has been extensive, nothing prepared me for my current opportunity as did the MPA opportunity.

The opportunity to network with other principals from the surrounding area is crucial. The content presented is current and extremely impactful in the decision-making process faced by districts across the State of Minnesota.

Please reconsider the funding of this opportunity so that students across the State continue to receive the quality education they are deserving of.

Sincerely,

Joni Irvin

Ellis Middle School Assistant Principal

I'm asking you to continue to support the Minnesota Principal's Academy.

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I personally found the MPA to be extremely beneficial in boosting my effectiveness as a leader. This is a critical program if we want Minnesota to continue to be at the top of academic achievement.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sarah Scullin Stokes

As a current administrator, I have heard about this fantastic program from many of my colleagues who have said it has been the most meaningful/ impactful professional development they have participated in. They commented on how it directly impacted how they complete their daily jobs to support student learning. Fortunately, my current district has seen the benefits of this program and I am currently signed up for the upcoming cohorts. With significant budget cuts throughout education in the coming years, everyone in education is going to be expected to do more with less. It is programs like these that might make it possible to maintain high quality schools even in the face of budget cuts.

I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing, and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

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*Soar Eagles Soar!*

Tim

**Tim Koschinska Ed.S**

I am writing today to strongly advocate for the continued funding of the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA). I cannot overstate the profound impact this program has had on my professional growth and my ability to lead effectively as an associate principal. Over the past 10 years in administration, the MPA stands out as by far the very best professional development experience of my career.

I participated in the MPA cohort during 2017-2019 and can attest that the learning, collaboration, and action research work we engaged in directly shaped how I approach leadership in my school. The program provided not only deep knowledge about systems thinking and leadership best practices but also an unmatched opportunity to connect with colleagues across the state, fostering a network of shared expertise that continues to support my work today.

This is not just my experience; principals across Minnesota consistently cite the MPA as the most useful professional development they have ever engaged in (Kemper et al., 2024). Yet, the very principals who are trusted to ensure our schools are safe, engaging, and academically rigorous are telling us they lack the time and opportunities for professional growth. The Minnesota Principals Survey shows that principals consistently report spending far less time on their own learning than they would like, and in the 2023 survey, they reported a decline in self-confidence in 47 of 49 areas of responsibility (Kemper et al., 2024). At a time when we are asking principals to do more than ever, cutting a proven source of support like the MPA sends a dangerous message about how we value their leadership.

The MPA has been a bipartisan success story since its inception in 2008, with legislators from both sides of the aisle recognizing the critical importance of investing in strong school leadership. As Grissom et al. (2021) remind us, *"Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership."*

Beyond my personal growth, the MPA benefits our entire profession. Participants engage in Action Learning Projects that tackle real-world challenges and share their findings publicly, advancing the field of educational leadership across the state. Many MPA alumni go on to serve as district leaders, superintendents, mentors, and even policymakers, multiplying the impact of this program far beyond their own schools.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed elimination of this modest but critical investment. **Principals need support, now more than ever.** The Minnesota Principals Academy is not just a professional development program; **it is an essential resource for cultivating the leadership our schools, teachers, and students deserve.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Tyler Shepard

Please do not eliminate funding for principals. In Monticello, I have seen first hand the growth that our principals are showcasing during and after their Principal Academy work. Please reconsider the elimination of funding for this incredibly important professional development for school principals. **We find it so important that we have even provided**

**written contract language for the completion of the program by our principals in the Monticello School District.**

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record and the funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).

Sincerely,

Eric Olson  
Superintendent  
Monticello School District

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I was a 2021-23 Participant and Graduate of the Minnesota Principals Academy - and it was the most powerful Professional Development program I've ever participated in! I continue to present my project to help other schools learn - and I am a stronger leader in my own building and district as a result as well!

**Key Program Points:**

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on then they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional



development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.

- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).
- Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.

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***Jeffrey Copp***  
***Pre-K4 Elementary Principal***  
***La Crescent-Hokah Schools***

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

My role as a central office leader in a West Metro school district provides an opportunity to observe principals throughout the career. After participating in MPA and working alongside principals who have, it is clear that principals benefit greatly from job-embedded, research supported learning. The schooling to earn the license is enough to make someone minimally competent; our schools need principals who are much, much more, and MPA is one of the few experiences for principals that provide that kind of learning.

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Dan Cahill

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) boasts a 16-year track record of delivering professional development that principals themselves cite as the most valuable they have participated in ([Kemper et al., 2024](#)). Funding for MPA has consistently enjoyed bipartisan support since its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressure from all directions, the removal of this proven source of professional growth and support would not only be a disinvestment in those planning to participate this fall, but also a dangerous message

to the profession as a whole.

I urge you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of educators entrusted with making our schools more engaging, humanizing, and academically rigorous for both students and staff.

The decision to eliminate funding for MPA contradicts the clear needs outlined in the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both 2021 and 2023, principals reported having far less time for professional development than they need, and when they do engage, MPA consistently ranks as the most valuable experience. In 2023 alone, principals reported a drop in self-confidence across 47 of 49 areas of responsibility ([Kemper et al., 2024](#)). This is not the time to cut a program that directly addresses those gaps.

As [Grissom et al. \(2021\)](#) powerfully state, “Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership” (p. xvi).

MPA’s impact goes far beyond the individuals who participate. Alumni lead not only in schools, but in district offices, as superintendents, in the Minnesota Department of Education, and as mentors to aspiring principals. The [Action Learning Projects](#) they complete during MPA are shared publicly, contributing to statewide improvement and innovation.

On a personal note, participating in MPA has fundamentally strengthened my ability to lead systemic change across our district. The program equipped me with the tools, frameworks, and confidence to align our instructional priorities with what matters most: creating schools where every student, especially those historically underserved, feels seen, supported, and challenged to thrive. The impact of MPA is not abstract—it shows up in how we design curriculum, support principals, and build learning environments that are engaging, humanizing, and academically rigorous.

Please continue your support of the Minnesota Principals Academy. Our students, educators, and future leaders depend on it.

Sincerely,  
Mark Miles  
Deeper Learning Coordinator  
Rochester Public Schools

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16-year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et al., 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bipartisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the

elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing, and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I benefited as a new building principal from this when I joined many years ago, and have served for the last number of years as a facilitator. Recently, I received two gratitude messages from principals who participated in sessions I led, highlighting the positive difference the academy had on their practice and on those they lead.

Please reconsider.

My thanks-

**Tim Anderson, Ed.D**

I am writing as lead researcher for the Minnesota Principals Survey (MnPS), and first author on the survey's [most recent report](#) (Kemper et al., 2024). I wish to strongly urge the K12 Education Finance Working Group to reconsider the decision to eliminate funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy. According to the MnPS, out of 12 types of professional development, participants in MPA rated it the *most useful* form of professional development in 2021 (100% rated it useful) and second most useful in 2023 (96% rated it useful), behind only networking with educational leaders--which is, itself, a key component of the MPA model. Eliminating funding for this program seems, therefore, at odds with the strong evidence of its utility at a time when principals are reporting significant drops in self-efficacy (Kemper et al., 2024).

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara Kemper

Sara Kemper, Ph.D. (she/her)

Research Associate, [Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement](#)

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et. al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Many of my colleagues have benefited deeply from their experience in MPA, and I am honored to have been accepted into the 2025–2027 cohort. At a time when educational leadership is in crisis and the future of public education feels increasingly uncertain, programs like MPA are not

optional—they are essential. Shifting priorities and unpredictable funding decisions are felt most acutely by building administrators, whose hands are often tied even as we are expected to do more with less. MPA equips us with the tools, courage, and clarity to lead through this complexity with purpose and strength. To remove this critical support now would be a disheartening blow to those on the front lines of public education. I urge you to preserve this investment in our principals, our schools, and the future we are all working to protect.

Respectfully,

Ms. Kristin Rolling  
Principal  
Stillwater Middle School

My name is Cristin Craig, and I am a school administrator that is about to complete the Minnesota Principals Academy. My learning during this program has been essential to my role collaboration between the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Services Cooperatives and the COMPASS Team has created a system of continuous support for school climate and culture. The learning from MPA has allowed me to base this support and our work in data and research in order to make improvements in Minnesota schools.

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

Again, I ask that you consider reinstating funds for the Minnesota Principals Academy. This is what is needed for the future of school leadership and Minnesota's students.

In community,

Cristin

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Cristin Craig, EdS

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the

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The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).

Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.

As a newer principal, this opportunity is vital to my own professional development. Given the dearth of people going into education and education leadership in particular, defunding the Principals Academy would result in more administrators leaving education, as personal confidence to lead, without support, would certainly diminish.

Yours in Education,  
Tanya Maethner

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et. al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

For years, I have been looking forward to participating in the MPA due to its excellent reputation and I will finally join the cohort this year. To further advocate for it, these are some relevant considerations:

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et. al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.
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These are times where education matters more than ever and we must continue to support schools, teachers, and the school leaders who are often taken for granted.

I appreciate your time and consideration,  
Paula Criego

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et. al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I personally participated in MPA from 2021-2023, and it has been, to date, the most profoundly impactful professional development I've received as a school administrator. The collaboration, learning, and research-driven professional growth has positively positioned me to lead effectively now and in the future. My husband, a 25+ year educator, as well, is a new principal this year. He was hopeful to follow in my footsteps and also participate in MPA as a new leader. Please reconsider your decision, and support this continued learning for our Minnesota principals. The ripples of this professional growth are far-reaching with positive impact on students, staff and families, both present day and into the future.

Thank you,

**Jenny Van Aalsburg**

Assistant Principal | Minnewashta Elementary

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

**As a superintendent of schools I have sent all my principals and building/district leaders to Minnesota principal academy- it is by far the best professional development for leaders.**

**Principals are an important element - actually the second most important role in school districts (for student academic success) is the principal.**

**As leaders, dedicated to student achievement, please fund this essential learning.**

Research supports the need for principal learning and the elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on then they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.

Furthermore- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al 2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).

Please reconsider the elimination of funding for MPA.

Thank you,  
**Renee Corneille**

Hello. My name is Patrice Relerford and I serve as the Vice President or Collective Impact and Giving at the Minneapolis Foundation. Our foundation proudly supports the Minnesota Principals Survey and follows issues related to principal leadership and development in our state.

We know from years of research that principals play a key role in the academic achievement of our students and the retention of our teachers. Principals in our state cited the **Minnesota Principals**



**Academy** as the most useful form of professional development they completed according to the [2023 survey results](#).

**I'm writing today to express my concern about the potential loss of funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy.** This program is an incredibly important professional development opportunity for school principals. The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over **16-year track record of providing useful professional development** for educators. This funding has had bi-partisan support since the academy's inception in 2008.

I'm very concerned about the removal of this funding for a proven source of ongoing support and professional development at a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions. This decision would not only be a disinvestment in the individuals who plan to participate in the academy in the fall, but could send a message about the value, or lack thereof, our state places on supporting educators in this important school leadership role.

I realize legislators face tough choices this year due to our state's financial challenges. However, I'm asking lawmakers to please reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people who are expected to ensure our schools are engaging and academically rigorous centers of learning and development for our students and teachers.

Sincerely,  
Patrice Relerford

I heard that the funding for the Minnesota Principal's Academy, through the University of Minnesota and National Institute of School Leadership was in danger of being cut.

Please do all you can to help avoid this happening.

I went through the program in 2019-2021 and it was the best professional development I have ever received in my career. I was an assistant principal at the time, and I credit that program for helping me develop and grow as a school administrator and eventually helping me land a head principal position.

The learning was integral for school leaders currently practicing as APs and principals.

I sincerely hope for the future of school leadership in our state that the funding will continue. After teachers, school principals have the greatest effect on student learning. This program better prepares us for that monumental responsibility.

Thank you for considering.

Steve Searl, Principal

As an educator with over 20 years experience, the last 15 as an administrator, I am writing to ask you to please reconsider the elimination of financial support of the MN Principals Academy! I can tell you first hand the MN Principals Academy changed my approach to educational leadership and helped me to become a leader that was grounded in research -- which resulted



in our building being a "Beating the Odds" school. No other professional development in my career has had the impact on me or my colleagues that the MN Principals Academy has had. It would be an immense loss to our profession, our teachers, and above all, our students to lose such an incredible resource.

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

It is my hope funding for MPA is reconsidered and reinstated. It is truly life-changing for many of us!

Mona Perkins  
Chief Academic Officer

Good morning, I hope your week is off to a great start. The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I cannot begin to tell you how valuable this professional development was for me as a building principal. Without this type of professional development available, we will be taking steps backwards. This is a time when we must support our school leaders.

- The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program.
- The Minnesota Principals Academy funding has been one of very few educational policies that has consistently enjoyed bi-partisan support dating back to 2008. Legislators past and present have recognized what research tells us - Principals matter. In fact, according to [Grissom, et., al](#)

[2021](#), "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership"(xvi).

- Beyond their own learning, MPA participants contribute to the broader field of principals across the state via their [Action Learning Projects](#) that are shared publicly for all to learn from. MPA Alum serve across the state not only in schools as building leaders, but also in district offices, as superintendents, as state department leaders, and mentors to teachers and those going into building leadership.

In Learning,  
Arthur Williams

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

I personally participated in the Academy over the past two years and the learning I gained through the units and the networking was immense. I believe this Academy has set me up for success in my principalship.

Thank you for considering the continued support!

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[Hannah Pagel](#)

I'm reaching out to ask you to continue supporting the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA)—a program that's made a deep impact on school leaders across our state, including me.

MPA has been around for over 16 years, and it's consistently ranked by principals as the *most useful* professional development they've experienced (MN Principals Survey, Kemper et al., 2024). In a role that's growing more complex every year, having access to meaningful learning like this is more important than ever.

As a past participant in MPA, I can tell you firsthand—it transformed the way I lead. It pushed me to grow in ways that directly benefit our students, especially those furthest from justice. I've also seen how participation by other leaders in our district has strengthened our entire system. It's one of the few professional development opportunities that truly sticks, long after the sessions end.

Let's be clear: other than teachers, *principals have the greatest impact on student achievement*. And right now, principals across Minnesota are telling us they *don't* have the time or support they need to grow professionally—while also reporting a drop in confidence in 47 out of 49 key areas of their work (MN Principals Survey, 2023). Cutting MPA funding at a time like this sends the wrong message.

This modest investment in MPA has had bipartisan support since 2008, and it continues to pay dividends. Graduates of the program are now leading schools, districts, and even working at the state level. They're also mentoring the next generation of school leaders. Through their Action Learning Projects, MPA participants are helping move the whole field forward—sharing practical, research-based strategies that others can use.

**I know budgets are tight. But if we want schools that are academically strong, equitable, and welcoming for all kids—then we need to keep investing in the people we count on to lead them.**

Thanks for considering this. Please keep this support in place for our principals, our students, and the future of public education in Minnesota.

Melissa Sonnek (she/her)  
Associate Superintendent

I'm writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed elimination of funding for the Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA). As a proud member of Twin Cities Cohort 7, I can say without hesitation that MPA has been the most valuable and impactful professional learning experience of my career. It directly influenced student outcomes in my schools by sharpening my leadership, deepening my instructional knowledge, and expanding my capacity to foster equitable systems.

The research supports what I experienced firsthand: principals matter. And principal development matters just as much. MPA's long-standing reputation—spanning more than 16 years—is supported by data from the Minnesota Principals Survey (Kemper et al., 2024), which consistently shows that principals cite MPA as the most useful professional development they've participated in. In fact, despite the increasing demands placed on school leaders, principals report having far less time for their own development than needed. The 2023 survey also revealed a significant decline in principal confidence across 47 of 49 responsibility areas. Now is not the time to dismantle a program that has helped reverse those trends.

Funding for MPA has historically received bipartisan support since its inception in 2008. This is one of the few education policies where both sides of the aisle have agreed: investing in school leadership is investing in student success. As Grissom et al. (2021) noted, "Principals really matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership."

MPA's impact extends beyond the classroom. Alumni contribute to the field statewide through publicly shared Action Learning Projects. Many go on to serve as district leaders, superintendents, state department leaders, and mentors for the next generation of educators. I've seen this ripple effect firsthand in my own district, where colleagues who've completed MPA have launched transformative initiatives that are now embedded in our strategic plan.

The proposed cut is not only a disinvestment in those preparing to begin their MPA journey this fall—it sends a disheartening message to those of us dedicating our lives to making schools more engaging, equitable, and rigorous learning environments.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider this decision and continue supporting this modest but high-impact investment in Minnesota's educational future.

With appreciation,

**YOU MATTER!**

Megan E. Willrett

This is to ask you with the greatest urgency to reconsider your decision to not fund the Minnesota Principals Academy for the coming year.

As a Professor of Education Policy and Leadership at the University of Minnesota, I have had a front row seat to the continuous and impressive contributions MPA has made to our state's K-12 leadership capacity over the last decade and more. Research tells us that building principals play an unparalleled role in creating conditions in schools where all students can learn, and staff can thrive. You will no doubt be receiving specific data from other concerned educators on the various impacts of MPA in preparing principals for this work.

The key point is that this is a clear, cost-effective, and proven means of improving education quality across our state. To withhold funding does not make sense.

Sincerely,  
Peter Demerath

The Minnesota Principals Academy (MPA) has an over 16 year track record of providing what principals themselves cite as the most useful professional development they have participated in ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). The funding of MPA has had bi-partisan support dating back to its inception in 2008. At a time when principals are facing immense pressures from all directions, the removal of this proven source of ongoing support and professional development for school leaders seems a disinvestment not only in the individuals who are planning to participate this next fall, but also a dangerous message to the profession. I am asking you to reconsider the elimination of this modest investment in a group of people entrusted and expected to ensure that our schools are engaging, humanizing and academically rigorous places for students and teachers.

**The Minnesota Principal Academy (MPA) transformed the way I lead as a school principal.**

Through my work supporting teachers and staff, I've learned that understanding how adults learn—drawing on adult learning theory—is essential to effective leadership. MPA helped deepen that understanding and showed me how to engage in research-based practices for continuous school improvement.

In addition, the collaboration and networking opportunities provided by MPA have made me a stronger leader and created a lasting professional network I can rely on well beyond the program itself.

- "The elimination of the Minnesota Principals Academy funding seems to contradict the needs of school principals as told through the Minnesota Principals Survey. In both the 2021 and 2023 surveys, principals cite their own professional development as an area they spend much less time on than they would like and the Minnesota Principals Academy as the professional development they have found most useful. In 2023, MN principals also reported a drop in self confidence in 47 of 49 responsibility areas ([Kemper et., al, 2024](#)). This would seem the wrong time to cut this historically legislatively supported program."

I have been a school principal/educational leader for 15 years and Minnesota Principal Academy has been hands down the best professional development I have received. I would respectfully request that you relook at cutting this funding. We need strong school leaders to support our teachers who directly impact and educate our students. Thank you for this consideration, Heidi

Heidi George (she/her)

Dear K-12 Working Group Members

As you complete your work to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate Education bills, we'd like to express our sincere gratitude for your service and commitment to ensuring positive outcomes for all Minnesota students. We recognize that in a tight budget year difficult decisions were made and we respectfully offer our comments and feedback as well as highlight areas where this group moved forward with positive student centered decisions:

- Attendance: We support the inclusion of bipartisan policy efforts to address chronic absenteeism (Article 1 Sections 1-4), however there is a glaring lack of timely and comprehensive public data available to better understand the severity of attendance issues. While again providing MDE funds to modernize district data submissions (Line 189.3) is laudable, doing so without expecting improved public data reporting on both absenteeism and discipline is a missed opportunity for transparency and accountability.
- Compensatory Revenue: We support the agreed-to hold harmless policy (Article 1 Section 17) but the effect of this change is diluted by allowing 40% of those funds generated by students in poverty attending a specific school within a district to be used at a different school (Article 1 Section 20) – this change will negatively impact at-risk students. We also support the establishment of a task force (Article 1 Section 27) that includes legislators and a diverse group of stakeholders to have a long overdue conversation about the purpose, goals, and direction of compensatory revenue and stand ready to support that discussion in a good faith and productive manner.
- College and Career Readiness After five years of bipartisan, local, and national effort it is incredible to see progress being made on the adoption of automatic enrollment policies in Minnesota. The inclusion of automatic enrollment as a priority measure for the Grants to increase science, technology, engineering, and math course offerings (Article 2 Section 1) is a small but mighty step in the direction that many states are already taking to remove barriers to rigorous coursework for underrepresented students.
- Literacy Aid: The changes to literacy incentive aid (Article 2 Section 21) are a missed opportunity to more fairly target funds to students to support the Read Act. While we support giving districts the flexibility to meet their local literacy plans, doubling down on the mechanism behind Literacy Incentive Aid while simply changing the name will not improve student outcomes or resource our schools in a way that meets student needs.

Sincerely,  
Matt Shaver, Senior Policy Director  
[mshaver@edalliesmn.org](mailto:mshaver@edalliesmn.org)