

*----- Superintendents Innovation Discussion Group -----*  
*Leaders seeking better results through innovation*

March 14, 2022

Senator Roger Chamberlain  
Chair of Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee  
Minnesota State Senate Office Building  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Representative Ruth Richardson  
Chair of House Education Policy Committee  
State Office Building  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Representative Jim Davnie  
Chair of House Education Finance Committee  
State Office Building  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Senator Chamberlain, Representative Richardson and Representative Davnie:

We are an informal group of superintendents from district and chartered schools across Minnesota who have worked tirelessly on innovation in education. We are writing in support of Senate File 3744 and House File 2726 (Hours of Instruction.) This bill gives local boards greater discretion over student learning time. Special appreciation to Senator Zach Duckworth and Representative Heather Edelson for being the lead authors on the bill.

When this pandemic is over education will never be the same again. Yet, we have basically the same system; most of the same laws; the same MDE and federal rules; the same everything. To create new models, schools need flexibility so we can personalize learning for every single student knowing their needs, aspirations and aptitudes are different. Sometimes learning opportunities need different amounts of time for some students. For some, learning can better be provided on Saturday or in the evenings. Learning might occur independent of school. In today's world, learning is all around us and we need to use the time that works best for that learning to occur. But frankly we can't do that as well as we'd like as the current system provides weak support for innovation.

The bill has no mandates. No appropriation is requested. No school has to use it. Learning time is one needed piece of redesign. Schools have ideas that will close achievement gaps, enhance equity, redesign high schools, empower teachers, provide career certifications to high school students so they have middle-class jobs when they exit high school, and the list goes on. But flexibility is needed. We are asking for your trust.

Thank you for your work during this complicated time. The list of supporting superintendents is attached.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Wedl                      Dennis L. Carlson                      Jay Haugen  
Co-facilitators of the Superintendents Innovation Discussion Group

*Denny denniscarlson@yahoo.com -- Jay jchaugen@mac.com -- Bob Robert\_wedl@yahoo.com*

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Members of this Group Co-signing the letter to Senator Roger Chamberlain, Representative Ruth Richardson and Representative Jim Davnie

Andrew Almos  
Superintendent of East Central District Schools

Carrie Bakken  
Coordinator of Avalon Chartered School

Benn Barton  
Superintendent of Princeton District Schools

Jason Berg  
Superintendent of Farmington District Schools

Daniel Bittman, EdD  
Superintendent of Elk River District Schools

Joe Brown  
Former Superintendent of Fairmont District Schools

Julie Critz  
Retired Superintendent of Alexandria District Schools

Julia Espe, EdD  
Retired Superintendent of Princeton District Schools

Matt Grose  
Superintendent of Grand Rapids District Schools

Dean Jennissen  
Superintendent of Chisago Lakes District Schools

Charlie Kyte, PhD  
Retired MASA Executive Director

Keith Lester  
Retired Superintendent of Brooklyn Center District Schools

Wade McKittrick  
Superintendent of Montevideo District Schools

Sara Paul, PhD  
Superintendent of North Branch District Schools

Denise Pontrelli  
Former Superintendent of Stillwater District Schools

Wade McKittrick  
Superintendent of Montevideo District Schools

Gina Meinertz, EdD  
Assistant Superintendent of Spring Grove District Schools

Eric Melbye, EdD  
Superintendent of Bloomington District Schools

Rhonda Mhiripiri-Reed, PhD  
Superintendent of Hopkins District Schools

Jerry Robicheau, PhD  
Board Member of Faribault District Schools

Jeff Ronneberg, EdD  
Superintendent of Spring Lake Park District Schools

Mark Schmitz  
Executive Director of Resources Training Service Cooperative

Tony Simmons  
Executive Director of High School for Recording Arts Chartered School

Teri Staloch, EdD  
Superintendent of Prior Lake District Schools

Chris Swensen, EdD  
Superintendent of Holdingford District Schools

Lisa Snyder, PhD  
Retired Superintendent of Lakeville District Schools

Andrew Traetow  
Superintendent of Fairmont District Schools

Tim Truebenbach  
Superintendent of Big Lake District Schools

Rachel Udstuen  
Superintendent of Spring Grove District Schools

Patrick Walsh  
Superintendent of Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa District Schools