



February 17, 2023

Re: Course Requirements SF 476

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), and Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) we would like to share some important concerns about SF 476 which requires a climate justice education program for students in elementary and secondary school. We have testified in the past with concerns about any new or additional required courses or education programs and wanted to again place our concerns on the record.



Local Control

We appreciate the commitment to strengthening climate justice issues, however, any new statewide requirements added to the currently required credits creates scheduling challenges and reduces elective opportunities for students. Statewide standards are adopted through a comprehensive process and taught in kindergarten through 12th grade. Curriculum and program decisions are best made at the local level by school boards working with their staff, students, parents, and community. Communities want input and choice in a district's academic curriculum and programming. Accordingly, we respectfully oppose SF 476 in its current form.

High School Coursework

Minnesota high school students have 36 months to complete the required 22.5 credits to graduate. Those required credits don't allow a lot of room for the classes students have worked so hard to master and want to continue throughout high school. Several bills have been introduced this session mandating courses and while the topics are all important, it puts students and families, especially within their senior year, in a position where choice is impacted. It is important to consider how new requirements would impact a student's electives, like CTE, language, math and music courses as well as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate offerings.

Costs

We would be happy to work together to strengthen climate justice education through the implementation of the new social studies standards. Please note that implementing new curriculum or educational programs is very costly. In addition to the cost of the curriculum, there are costs associated with staff training, implementation, and reporting.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.