



Senator John Marty, Chair
Human Services Committee
April 19, 2023

Chair Marty and Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW-MN) and the MN School Social Work Association (MSSWA), we are writing in support of several components in House File 2497.

NASW-MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers, and MSSWA is a professional group who advance the practice of school social work in MN. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in children's mental health and wellness in schools.

We appreciate the hard work of the Education Finance committee balancing the many needs in schools through Senate File 2684. Specifically, we are grateful for Senate investment in several key areas:

- Reimbursement for Social Work Services (Article 5, Section 11): Reforming the federal reimbursement process will allow school districts to access needed federal funds for our schools that social workers qualified as mental health providers and practitioners are already providing. This comes at no cost to the state and will reduce the special education cross subsidy. This included language will allow reimbursement through Federal Medicaid for the services school social workers provide to eligible students as part of a comprehensive evaluation process and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- School Support Personnel Funding and Mental Health Lead (Article 4, Section 17 & 18): School social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, and chemical health counselors work together to address the increasingly complex student needs that show up in schools across MN every day. This provides important funding to schools so they can maintain a team of these professionals in every building. We appreciate not requiring a match from school districts. Furthermore, the added lead position at MDE allows an extra resource for schools when they need to coordinate extraordinary mental health support when outside trauma comes inside school buildings.

Social workers are trained in the practice of understanding the connection between a person's behavior and the environment in which they live. Students' lives at home and at school are connected, and supporting mental health positively impacts learning. The measures included in Senate File 2684 expand the capacity of school social workers to use their unique skills to ensure that students have the necessary support in other areas of their life so they can achieve their full academic potential in the classroom. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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