

The Saville Family



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Dear Chair Kunesh and Members of the Senate Education Finance Committee,

As a parent of two students in St. Michael-Albertville (STMA) Schools, an STMA School Board member, a substitute teacher, and someone who has worked in five school districts in various positions, I implore you to support **SF866, SF1601, and SF2552**, which you will be hearing in committee on Tuesday.

The impacts of education funding have reached a critical point. The strain on our schools is noticeable by students, staff, families, and the community. Though the school district has been fiscally responsible and maximized our resources (spending almost half as much per pupil on administration as the state average), the district has had to make heartbreaking cuts to staff, programs, and materials. The district has been forced to cut 78 amazing staff from every job classification in the last 2.5 years. Class sizes are now too large with 27-28 in kindergarten classrooms, 30-38 in 1st-5th grade classrooms, and 35-43 in secondary classrooms. This has affected students' academic skills and mental health, as well as that of our staff. Our students now have fewer programs and classes from which to choose, including AP, advanced, and high-potential classes. In addition, activity fees have doubled, and bussing has been reduced so students are walking greater distances to school.

Since we are a low property-wealth district, our residents have to bear the majority of cost increases. STMA does not currently have an operating levy, unlike 70% of school districts in the state. Our proposed operating levies—which are for expenses like staff salaries, bussing, books, etc.—have failed in the last two years. However, **SF866, SF1601, and SF2552** would provide much-needed equalization and tax relief to our residents and, in turn, help our schools by increasing the chances of passing an operating levy. Moreover, these bills will benefit every school district in Minnesota.

Again, I humbly ask you to support these bills. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

In Support of Education,

Hollee Saville
St. Michael-Albertville School Board Clerk
www.stma.k12.mn.us