



MINNEAPOLIS
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TO: Senate Committee on Human Services Members
FROM: Jennifer Whitcomb
RE: Support for SF1028, Written Testimony
DATE: March 6, 2023

As the mother of two school-age children and a registered, licensed occupational therapist who works as the coordinator for third-party reimbursement at the Minneapolis Public Schools, I know firsthand that passage of SF1028 is a win for Minnesota children, families, schools, and the State of Minnesota.

SF1028 is a win for Minnesota children:

- Minnesota children are in **urgent** need of mental health services ([1](#)).
- Schools aim to **prevent** serious mental health diagnoses by providing services relevant to children's needs, development, and learning abilities.
- SF1028 will bolster mental health services that are already being provided **year-round** to children of all ages in schools who have eligible needs ([2](#), [3](#)).

SF1028 is a win for Minnesota families:

- Special education services are carved out of Medicaid; there is **no cost** to families. Medicaid reimbursement for school-based services does not affect public or private coverage, TEFRA, waived programs, limits, or thresholds ([4](#)).
- Families can access qualified mental health providers, both in schools and the community, because all mental health providers in Minnesota have the **same** education, training, certification, and licensing requirements ([5](#)).

SF1028 is a win for Minnesota schools:

- SF1028 will allow schools to access federal Medicaid funds for special education mental health services rather than drawing down their educational funds and increasing cross-subsidy ([6](#)).
- Federal Medicaid is the path for **sustainable funding** to build up and provide ongoing mental health services for children in Minnesota schools.

SF1028 is a win for the State of Minnesota:

- There is **no cost** to the state; schools are reimbursed with federal Medicaid funds ([7](#)).
- The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act expands vital mental health services and provides federal support for states and districts ([8](#)).

Therefore, I urge the committee to pass SF1028 and thank you for taking time to review this testimony.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Whitcomb

Minnesota Mother, Occupational Therapist, and Third-Party Reimbursement Coordinator for Minneapolis Public Schools

Sources:

1. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/mchs/surveys/mss/docs/statewidetables/Heterosexual22.pdf>
2. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/b/300.106>
3. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/3525.0755/>
4. https://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_185200#other
5. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/245I.04#:~:text=A%20mental%20health%20professional%20must,aplicable%20health%2Drelated%20licensing%20board>
6. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/127A.065>
7. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/125A.74>
8. <https://oese.ed.gov/bipartisan-safer-communities-act/#:~:text=On%20June%2025%2C%202022%2C%20President,and%20positive%20school%20environments%20for>