

February 29, 2024

Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn
567 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155



Sen. Mary Kunesh
3209 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Kotyza Witthuhn and Sen. Kunesh,

Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) represents all 331 school boards across Minnesota. They are locally elected officials and are responsible for the governance of all public schools.

One of our school boards' responsibilities is to adopt standards for student learning in health. This responsibility is one they take great care in ensuring the standards meet student, family and community needs and values. We have strong concerns with removal of local decision-making as it relates to locally adopted health standards. MSBA has a long standing legislative position adopted by our Delegate Assembly in 2019.

4.010 Urges the legislature to retain a school district's local authority in determining curriculum, course offerings, graduation requirements, and other locally developed standards, where applicable.

In addition, we ask you to consider the following reasons for local school boards to retain the authority, and responsibility, to adopt local health standards:

Community Engagement: Local decision-making fosters community involvement and buy-in. Parents, educators, and community members want to have a strong voice in shaping policies that affect their children's health and well-being.

Diverse Local Needs: Local control allows for district solutions that address the unique circumstances and demographics of Minnesota's communities. Adopting statewide standards could overlook these differences and impose a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not be effective or feasible for every community.

Accountability and Responsibility: Local control encourages constituent accountability among school boards and administrators. Districts are directly accountable to the community for the health outcomes of their students, and they can be held responsible for the effectiveness of the health standards adopted.

In summary, while statewide health standards may offer consistency and uniformity, they risk overlooking local needs and undermining community engagement that our families and communities want. Local control provides the flexibility, accountability, and responsiveness necessary to address the diverse health challenges facing K-12 students effectively.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Respectfully,

Minnesota School Boards Association