



April 9, 2024

Chair Kunesh and members of the Education Finance committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP), an organization that advocates for, supports and promotes alternative learning programs in Minnesota, I write to extend our support for SF3860.

MAAP has more than 800 teacher/instructor members from over 300 alternative learning programs around the state. Our programs strive to meet the needs of the nearly 150,000 Minnesota students who struggle in traditional classrooms and receive alternative education services. These students represent nearly 16% of all Minnesota public school students.

Students in alternative programs have unique needs, and SF3860 recognizes their need for additional programming, made possible through extended time revenue. At-risk students (as defined by statute) enter alternative programs seriously deficient in academic skills and often with compounding social, emotional and mental health problems, which demand individualized teaching and strategies to address negative and sometimes dangerous attitudes. Supporting these students takes skilled instruction and guidance over time.

The additional per pupil general revenue multiplier for State Approved Alternative Programs of .2 cap has created a funding gap to meet the needs of troubled, at-risk students who benefit from specialized, enriched programming. We believe that the pilot program created in Section 4 of the bill to fully fund extended time revenue recognizes this gap and student need. Many students in our alternative programs need extra time and attention to be successful in school and will benefit from extended time revenue. This pilot program would be a starting point for helping these students thrive. Far too often, investments in general education are made without special consideration of students who better succeed in alternative settings. We appreciate your leadership in bringing forward this legislation to recognize their unique needs.

We offer MAAP as a resource as you deliberate an education budget that prioritizes our most vulnerable students. We thank you for your time, public service and consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Laura Freer
President, Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs