

MINNESOTA ALLIANCE WITH YOUTH

January 27, 2025

Dear Senator Kunesh, Senator Rarick, and Members of the Minnesota Senate Education Finance Committee,

Thank you for your ongoing attention to the issue of chronic absenteeism in Minnesota schools. Too many Minnesota students are missing too many school days.

The Minnesota Alliance With Youth places AmeriCorps Promise Fellows in middle and high schools to work with students identified by school staff as benefiting from additional support. Students are considered based on their attendance, school engagement, and grades.

We know that our Promise Fellow members have a real impact on students. An independent research analysis found that students working with a Promise Fellow attend school more than similar students not working with a Promise Fellow, and some groups of students as much as two to three weeks more. They also attend school on time, with fewer tardies. After reflecting on those research insights, we are implementing changes to further strengthen our program, providing members with additional training, and are again assessing our impact on students.

During the 2024 legislative session your committee recognized the impact that the Promise Fellows program has and provided us with one-time funding. We are grateful for that recognition and support. That funding has allowed us to reduce our fees, making Promise Fellows more accessible to more schools and students. We have expanded the number of schools we serve across the state and doubled the number of Promise Fellows currently serving in Minnesota schools.

The issue and impact of chronic absenteeism will not be going away anytime soon. While post-pandemic chronic absenteeism has spiked to over 25% in the 2018-19 school year 17% of Minnesota students were chronically absent. At the Alliance we believe that was too large a number of students missing too much school. Supporting students and families in attendance will require long-term, ongoing effort. Proposals such as SF474, and the SCS0133A-1 amendment, providing schools with flexibility in their use of student support personnel aid are creative proposals that can make critical support more available to students who will benefit.

Thank you,



Jim Davnie, Executive Director

Minnesota Alliance With Youth is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. No goods or services were provided in exchange for your generous financial donation.

Minnesota Alliance With Youth – 2550 University Ave West #200, St Paul, MN 55114, www.mnyouth.net