



Senator Mary Kunesh, Chair
Senator Jason Rarick, Chair
Education Finance Conference Committee
January 28, 2025

Chairs Kunesh and Rarick and Education Finance Conference Committee Members,

On behalf of professional organizations representing school support personnel, we are writing to comment on the Senate File 133. This language expands the use of school support personnel funding beyond the original scope.

Our membership organizations include the Minnesota School Social Work Association (MSSWA), the Minnesota School Psychologists Association (MSPA), the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota (SNOM), and the Minnesota School Counselor Association (MSCA). Collectively, our members work as a team to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of students in Minnesota.

In 2023, the Legislature dedicated funding for schools to expand the positions of school social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, and chemical health counselors so that we can address the increasingly complex student needs that show up in schools across MN every day.

Because there is likely agreement about the importance of maintaining these licensed professionals in every building, we caution against expanding the use of this funding so broadly without more engagement. The intent of the 2023 legislation was to increase staffing capacity to better address the needs of students in other areas of their life so they can achieve their full academic potential in the classroom. In contrast, the language allows school districts to use the funds for other positions related to attendance. In reality, this definition is broad and will stretch the limited funds to licensed as well as non-licensed staff.

We recognize the desire to give financial flexibility to school districts in a time of stretched resources. Yet, it is for this reason we urge caution before expanding eligible staffing positions. The proposal in SF 133 for mileage is manageable, but expanding the scope of the funding to anyone who works with attendance will in all likelihood, dilute the already limited resources. It is counter-productive to hire staff related to attendance if it depletes funding for the licensed professionals who are needed to address mental health and other complex needs impacting attendance.

We appreciate your support of student Minnesota, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you as you develop the most effective ways to fund their needs.

Sincerely,

Jessie Kember, President-Elect, Damion Smith, President, & Sarah Wollersheim Shervey,
Legislative Chair

MN School Psychology Association

Julie Campanelli, LICSW, Ed.S, President & Christy McCoy, MSW, LICSW, Legislative Chair,

MN School Social Workers Association

Calli Moreau, Board Chair; Sydney Piras, Board Chair-Elect, Marguerite Ohrtman & Carolyn
Berger, Advocacy Co-Chairs,

MN School Counselor Association

Tara Cliff, School Nurse Organization of Minnesota