



January 29, 2025

Chairs Kunesh, Rarick and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit recommendations on improving Minnesota's educational landscape. I respectfully submit two significant, transformational pieces of legislation that you can take action on to help children achieve their full potential by accessing the kind of education that helps them thrive.

Education is the foundation of opportunity in our society, and access to public education should never be determined by arbitrary lines on a map. Yet, today, the exclusionary school district boundaries too often act as barriers, dictating the educational opportunities available to our children. These boundaries can unfairly limit children by keeping them in schools that may not meet their needs, while limiting families from accessing better options that are just a short distance away.

First, eliminating enrollment barriers will empower families to choose public schools that meet their children's needs without bureaucratic barricades holding them back. If passed, families who request a transfer to a public school in Minnesota outside of their resident district will be granted that transfer, as long as that school has capacity. Removing this enrollment hurdle will ensure that every family in Minnesota is empowered with educational opportunities—regardless of where they live—because a child's address should never determine their aspirations.

Second, there is a troubling statute on the books that we believe is a disservice to families seeking the best educational opportunities for their children. No parent should be criminalized for sending their child to a public school.

The reality is that educational inequities persist in Minnesota, and they are often drawn along socioeconomic and racial lines. Low-income families and families of color are disproportionately affected by the current restrictions, which limit their access to better-resourced schools outside their district boundaries.

Worse yet, parents who use an alternative address to access better schools for their kids today risk being reported or even criminalized. Sadly, several parents nationwide have been made criminals for enrolling their kids in public schools.

Take [Kelley Williams-Bolar from Ohio](#). She used her father's address in the neighboring town to enroll her daughters in a school where she believed they would have a safer learning environment. For this, she was investigated, arrested, and jailed for nine days.

Public education should be open and accessible to all. Amending this statute will ensure that no family will endure the pain of criminal prosecution for simply trying to provide their children with better educational opportunities.



When every child has access to a school that meets their unique learning needs, our communities and economy thrive. Students who are empowered to succeed become the leaders, innovators, and contributors who will shape a brighter future for Minnesota. Thus, families should be empowered to choose schools that meet their children's needs without fear of punishment or arbitrary lines drawn that limit their access to a better education.

I urge this committee to support this legislation and help us create a stronger education system for all. Thank you for your time and for considering this vital step forward. I am happy to answer any questions or provide further information.

Sincerely,

*RaeAnna K. Lee*

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**Attachments:**

AFP-MN Education One-Pager

Language Proposals

[Kelley Williams-Bolar Story](#) (link)

[National Poll Reinforces Strong Support for Education Freedom Policies](#) (link)

[yes. every kid. Public Education Your Way Report](#) (link)