



February 4, 2025

Senator Rarick and members of the Senate Education Finance committee:

As the collective voice of Minnesota's labor unions representing over 300,000 members of more than 1,000 local unions in every corner of the state, we advocate for policies that improve the lives of workers, retirees, and their families. That is why we support funding for public education.

Providing public schools that are safe, healthy and welcoming spaces to teach and learn in, and where students' academic and social emotional learning needs are met, is an essential building block to giving all students an equal opportunity to succeed, and to having an educated citizenry that will protect and participate in our democratic government.

Public school staff—along with many other front-line workers—were heroes during the pandemic. They have continued to keep children fed, looked after their considerable mental health and social emotional needs, and kept kids engaged during a time of great uncertainty. Public school staff deserve the resources they need to do their jobs safely, with appropriate working conditions, and the supports they need to recruit and retain a diverse workforce where all employees receive a living wage.

There are real issues in public education that must be addressed, including educator shortages, mental health challenges, and the effects on students of disruption and missed instructional time. However, we know what needs to be done and what works: expanding community schools and wraparound services; creating new pathways for students, including career and technical education; and ensuring a greater focus on teaching and learning, not testing.

Public education is how we help our children have a bright future. It is an economic necessity, an anchor of democracy, a moral imperative and a fundamental civil right.

Best regards,

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Legislative Director





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