



March 3, 2025

To: Chair Kunesh and members of the Senate Education Finance Committee

From: Richard J. Gibson, Achievement Plus Director, Wilder Foundation

Chair Kunesh and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation to express our strong support for SF 2007. This bill makes several critical policy changes that the Minnesota Full-Service Community Schools Network has identified as necessary to realize the spirit of the original bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature in 2023. Approximately 55 schools submitted applications for the most recent state-funded FSCS grant in early 2024 and 25 were awarded. Given that districts were limited to applying for only three schools, we believe there is a stronger level of interest across the state in this evidence-based student success strategy. This current bill proposes additional funding to support and sustain approximately 60 new and existing FSCS across Minnesota with the potential to support approximately 24,000 youth and their families.

Full-Service Community Schools combine evidence driven strategies that are designed to support both student and family success. FSCS sites offer community service partnerships, family and community engagement, enriched and extended learning, and foster collaborative and community-based leadership. Effective sites serve rural, suburban, and metro areas schools across Minnesota.

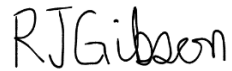
The Wilder Foundation and Saint Paul Public Schools have partnered for over 25 years in support of Achievement Plus – our local name for the FSCS strategy. We currently support over 1,200 St Paul students and their families in three PreK – 5th grade schools. Achievement Plus Liaisons support their schools in so many ways – from supporting enrichment activities like sports and arts programming with St Paul Parks and Rec and afterschool programming with Beacons to coordinating communication with families and community partners and within the school building. Achievement Plus Liaisons also play a critical role in connecting their schools to the broader community – whether that be through recruitment and coordination of volunteer supports for day-to-day school engagement or through regular meetings with East Side and North End wellbeing and business groups.

The end result of this work allows Achievement Plus schools the ability to attract and align additional community resources in support of students and their families. Last school year,

these relationships allowed Achievement Plus to realize \$6.14 in community services and resources for every \$1 invested by Saint Paul Public Schools. The FSCS model offers an efficient and flexible tool in inviting and managing community resources which, in turn, allows education professionals to focus on educating their students.

Thank you for your consideration and support for Full-Service Community Schools, we urge you to pass SF 2007.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RJGibson". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Richard J. Gibson, MSW, LGSW
Achievement Plus Director
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation