

Amy Pocrnich

Proctor, Minnesota 55810

March 19, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I strongly support the proposed \$105 million in state funding to provide summer unemployment insurance (UI) for non-licensed school staff over the next year and a half. This funding is critical to ensuring that school districts can continue providing high-quality education and services to students without additional financial strain.

School Districts Cannot Afford to Cover This Cost

Minnesota school districts are already operating under tight budgets due to rising costs of transportation, special education, and student services. If districts are required to cover the costs of summer unemployment insurance from their general funds, it will divert resources from students, impacting classrooms, student programs, and essential support services. Many districts are already managing budget deficits, and requiring them to cover these additional costs will result in decisions such as staff reductions, larger class sizes, and the elimination of student programs.

The State Must Provide Dedicated Funding

A statewide solution is essential to prevent an unfair financial burden on school districts. The proposed \$105 million in state funding would allow non-licensed school staff to receive the summer UI benefits they need without jeopardizing the quality of student learning and support. Without this state funding, districts will be forced to increase class sizes, reduce or eliminate programs, or lay off staff, negatively impacting student success and well-being.

Every dollar from a district's general fund to cover UI is not spent on students, curriculum, and educational programs. Our students deserve a stable and well-supported learning environment, and providing summer UI funding at the state level is necessary to ensure that school districts can maintain essential services without compromising educational quality.

I urge you to support this critical funding and ensure Minnesota's school districts and non-licensed staff have the resources they need to provide our students with the highest-quality education and services all year round.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Pocrnich, MBA

Assistant Professor
Clerk for the Proctor School Board