
April 1, 2025



Senator Kunesh, Chair
Senate Education Finance Committee Members
75 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Kunesh and Members:

My name is Anna Wallin and I am the Executive Director and a parent of a student at Aurora Waasakone Community of Learners K-8 charter school in Bemidji, MN.

As you consider SF2255, the Governor's proposed budget, I want to call your attention to the proposed deeply problematic cuts to chartered public school students. These cuts include reductions to special education funding. As a K-8 charter school in northern MN, AWCL enrolls several students with IEPs who are looking for a school that offers programming like ours – small class sizes, outdoor learning, place-based interdisciplinary program, American Indian supports, and special education services that allow students to participate alongside their peers as much as possible. Families are looking for a school like ours that is safe and inclusive, and students with IEPs should be supported just as much as their peers.

AWCL is in Bemidji, which is in Beltrami County, and many of our students come from low-income households. We also serve 75+ students from local reservations; students in foster care; students experiencing homelessness; and many of these students have special educational needs. Families have shared that our programming has done more for their children than they could have imagined. That their children are excited to go to school, that they have outdoor learning opportunities that were not available to them at other schools, that their family feels safe and included as part of our school community.

At AWCL, reductions in special education funding and operating revenue for our students would be devastating. Charter schools do not have access to additional funding to cover the special education supports students need like paraprofessionals, occupational and speech therapy, specialized instruction, and more. We would be forced to cut programming that is critical to our programming model to cover costs of special education supports that students truly need. Our programming would be gutted, and families would be forced to enroll in other schools that do not offer the programming and inclusiveness we offer at AWCL. This would be devastating not only to our special education students, but to their families, our staff, and our overall school community.

As you put forth your Education Finance Omnibus bill, we respectfully urge you to protect this critical state funding for charter school students during this challenging time. Our students need your support now more than ever.

Sincerely,

Anna Wallin
she/her

Co-Founder | Executive Director

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