

Elementary Campus

903 6th Ave Court NE
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Middle School Campus

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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 Cora Packard and I am an Executive Director at Art and Science Academy.

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.

Art and Science Academy is a public K-8 charter school committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Our diverse student body includes a wide range of backgrounds, with approximately 20% of our students receiving special education services and 38% qualifying for free or reduced-price meals. We strive to meet the unique needs of all learners through individualized support, engaging curriculum, and a strong sense of community.

Art and Science Academy offers a dynamic and engaging educational experience that integrates the arts and sciences into daily learning. Through hands-on projects, creative exploration, and a focus on critical thinking, students develop a deeper understanding of core subjects while fostering their creativity. Our curriculum emphasizes collaboration, problem-solving, and real-world application, preparing students for success in an ever-changing world. With a strong commitment to innovation and individualized learning, we create an environment where students are inspired to explore, discover, and grow.

In my school, reductions in special education funding and overall operating revenue would have significant consequences for our students. Decreased funding would mean fewer specialized staff to provide individualized support, leading to larger caseloads and reduced instructional time for students with disabilities. It could also result in the loss of essential resources such as intervention programs, assistive technology, and classroom accommodations that help students succeed. Additionally, budget cuts could impact professional development for teachers, limiting their ability to implement best practices in special education. Ultimately, reductions in funding would hinder our ability to provide the inclusive, high-quality education that all students deserve.

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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,

Cora Packard
Executive Director
Art and Science Academy