



Naytahwaush Community Charter School 4155

PO Box 9, 242 Church Street

Naytahwaush, MN 56566

Phone: 218-935-5025 – Fax: 218-935-5263

www.ntwschool.org

March 31, 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 Beth Zietz and I am the Executive Director at *Naytahwaush Community Charter School (NCCS)*, a PUBLIC school located in the village of Naytahwaush, MN located on the White Earth Indian Reservation. Our student population is 100% Native American and over 90% of our students qualify for free/reduced lunch. We are the only public school in the Village of Naytahwaush. The resident district traditional school is approximately 30 miles away.

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.

- Approximately 21% of our students receive special education services as outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Currently, these plans are required to be followed by law and are written to provide support services for students with learning disabilities. A reduction in special education funding will not only impact these students, but all of the students attending
- The services in a student's IEP, legally, must be provided. A reduction in special education funding will result in the diversion of funds from our general population of students to meet the needs of students on IEPs.
- The students who attend our school were abandoned by the traditional, resident district. The state does not provide us with fair and equitable funding for our PUBLIC school students. Native Americans are arguably the most underserved school population in the state and likely the nation. The educational opportunity gaps are huge. A reduction in funding of any sort to our PUBLIC charter school will only widen these educational opportunity gaps, while children from families making over \$100,000 continue to receive free school meals (a well-intentioned, but unnecessary program for many affluent families). If you are looking for places to save money, please look into that program. Please do not balance the budget on our most underserved students!

The Naytahwaush Community School will provide a child-centered environment where learning is relevant and respects the traditions and wisdom of community, family, and self.



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As you put forth your Education Finance Omnibus bill, NCCS and the Naytahwaush Community respectfully urges 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth A. Zietz", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Beth A. Zietz
Executive Director
Naytahwaush Community Charter School
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