



April 1, 2025

Via E-Mail Delivery

Senator Mary K. Kunesch, Chair
3209 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Jason Rarick, Republican Lead
3413 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Kunesch and Senator Rarick,

Thank you for your service and leadership to the Senate Education Finance Committee. MINNDEPENDENT is the largest and most connected organization serving and supporting nonpublic schools in Minnesota. On behalf of our 181 member schools and more than 41,000 students educated by our members schools, I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed elimination of aids to nonpublic students and nonpublic pupil transportation services included in Governor Walz's budget recommendations to the legislature as part of SF2255.

Minnesota Statute 123B.40 states, "It is the intent of the legislature to provide for distribution of educational aids such as textbooks, standardized tests and pupil support services so that **every school pupil in the state will share equitably in education benefits and therefore further assure all Minnesota pupils and their parents freedom of choice in education.**"

In addition, Minnesota Statute 123B.84 states, "In districts where the state provides aids for transportation **it is in the public interest to provide equality of treatment in transporting school children of the state who are required to attend elementary and secondary schools pursuant to chapter 120A, so that the health, welfare and safety of the children, while using the public highways of the state, shall be protected.**"

These vital services, established five decades ago, advance the concept of providing equitable supports to all students is the right thing to do for students.

Minnesota is known for taking care of its citizens and students and eliminating these services runs in conflict with the common good. To refer back to Minnesota Statutes 123B.40 and 123B.84, how is it in the "public interest" to deny health and counseling services, safe transportation and educational aids to students and families, many with limited economic means, and who made a decision to select the education option that is in the best interest of their own children?



Regardless of the state budget, the legislative make-up or leadership in the Executive Branch over the past 50 years, these services have never been proposed for complete elimination. I strongly urge the legislature to protect these essential services that directly impact students and families of Minnesota and ensure fair and equitable treatment for all students.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the concerns of nonpublic students and families of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Tim Benz'.

Tim Benz
President

CC: Members of the Senate Education Finance Committee