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April 1, 2025

Senator Kunesh, Chair
Senate Education Finance Committee Members
3209 Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF2255

Dear Chair Kunesh and Members:

My name is Shelly Pierson Evans and I am the Executive Director at North Shore Community School (NSCS).

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 PreK-6th grade school nestled between Duluth and Two Harbors in Northern Minnesota, we serve students during their formative elementary years. Our teachers do more than strive to meet the needs of all students, they are exceeding meeting those needs. Families with students receiving services in Special Education choose NSCS because our staff do such an amazing job supporting their child and helping them succeed.

NSCS has been serving families in our area since 1961. Generations have attended our school in the northwoods, both when it was a traditional district school, and now as a chartered public school going on 23 years. We continue to meet the needs of our families, even with less funding than traditional districts. We maintain at a minimum a 20% fund balance, budget conservatively, and offer engaging opportunities for our students.

In my school, reductions in special education funding and operating revenue for our students would mean close to \$100,000 in reduced revenue from these two reductions alone.

These reductions are the equivalent of 1.5 teachers salaries, four paraprofessionals, increased class size, fewer dollars for classroom supplies, less support from the district to cover rising insurance costs, and more. Education has a number of challenges facing us, including staffing and teacher shortages. When

faced with these challenges, we want great educators to stay in education and for people dedicated to the education of children to choose to work in our schools. This funding is critical to the future of our state and our local communities.

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

Sincerely,

Shelly Pierson Evans

Shelly Pierson Evans
Executive Director

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