



TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School #4095

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Authorized by: Chisago Lakes Public Schools #2144

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 Members:

My name is Mike Hamernick and I am the Executive Director at TRIO Wolf Creek Distance Learning Charter School #4095 located in Chisago City.

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.

At TRIO Wolf Creek, approximately 16% of our students are on IEPs and 33% qualify for free or reduced meals. We provide services for these students that can be more costly than that of a non-disabled and economically advantaged students. Due to already inadequate funding by the state and federal government, we see a 10% of costs hit to our general fund annually. Due to the proposed changes that only target charter schools, we would double that and see a 20% expense to our already tight general fund.

In my school, reductions in special education funding and operating revenue for our students would mean that students who chose to attend our school because their home school district could not provide the level of service they require and deserve would again be failed by the MN public school system. It could potentially mean the loss of teaching jobs (and therefore tax revenue) if staffing cuts were necessary; and it could mean expensive repair bills down the road if the building could not be maintained adequately.

Please don't balance your budget on the backs of the disabled and economically disadvantaged.

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,

Mike D. Hamernick
Executive Director
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