



Senate File #2255 - Charter School Budget Cuts.

April 01, 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 Kimberly Scott and I am a Long-term Substitute with Special Education at Kato Public Charter School in Mankato, MN

At this time, we should be investing more in our students, not less. We can't balance the state budget on the backs of **charter school students** and **students with disabilities**. These are public school students, and they deserve to be treated fairly with the same level of funding and support as any other student in our state.

I have worked in education, in some form or another, for close to twenty years. This is my first time in a charter school and I can tell you without any doubt that Charter Schools play an important role in the public school system. Kato Public Charter School is the only place in Mankato where this specific group of students can get the education they need because they are coming here behind grade level and feeling like failures. Their mental health is suffering and they can't see a way forward. But here at Kato Public Charter, the staff meet them where they are at and show them what they can be by utilizing their strengths and providing a more one-on-one education to help their individual needs. They are supported with their mental health struggles and are shown how to use their public education to get them to an end goal that they choose. They could be the kids that get lost in a traditional school system, but here they are seen and celebrated. As I asked some of my students what they would do if the school had to close down- their overwhelming response was "I'll drop out because I'm not going back to the other schools". Is that really what we want for a public education system?

As you consider SF2255, the Governor's proposed budget, please understand that these budget cuts will be deeply problematic to public charter school students.

Kato Public Charter School Demographics:

- KPCS 45% Special Education vs State average of 18%
- KPCS 74% Free & Reduced Lunch vs State average of 43%



As you **consider SF2255**, 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,
Kimberly Scott
Long-term Substitute; Special Education
Kato Public Charter School