

Dear Senate Education Finance Committee,

My name is Najax Siciid and I am the Executive Director at Surad Academy in Faribault. As you consider HF2433, the Governor's proposed budget, I want to call your attention to the proposed deeply problematic cuts to chartered public school students.

Surad Academy is located in Faribault, a small town in the deep south of Minnesota. Thirty percent of the population in this town consists of working-class, and first-generation immigrants. These individuals work in factories such as Jennie-O Turkey Store and Daikin, and some of their children attend charter schools like Surad Academy.

- Surad Academy serves 82 scholars in grades K-6.
- Although Surad Academy has only been serving the Faribault community for about 1.5 years, our students have performed exceptionally well on the MCA, earning recognition from our authorizer for having our ELL students exceed the state averages in both the MCA's, Math and English.

A reduction in state special education funding can significantly impact the academic performance of special education (SPED) students in several ways.

- 1) **Reduced Individualized Support:** Special education funding often supports services such as one-on-one tutoring, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral interventions. A decrease in funding could result in fewer hours or less frequent support for students with disabilities, making it more difficult for them to succeed academically and develop essential skills.
- 2) **Limited Access to Assistive Technology:** Many special education students rely on assistive technology, such as speech-to-text programs, communication devices, or adaptive tools, to support their learning. Funding cuts may limit the ability of schools to provide or maintain this technology, further hindering student progress.
- 3) **Increased Stress on Teachers and Staff:** Special education teachers and staff are already tasked with meeting a variety of student needs. With reduced funding, teachers may have to take on more responsibilities, leading to burnout and reduced effectiveness. This, in turn, can negatively impact students' academic progress and social-emotional development.

As you put forth your Education Finance Omnibus bill, I 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,

Najax Siciid

Executive Director

Surad Academy

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