

March 31, 2025

Senator Kunesch, Chair
Senate Education Finance Committee Members
75 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155


Dear Chair Kunesch and Members:

My name is Matt McFarlane and I am the Executive Director at PiM Arts High School in Eden Prairie. 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 PiM, 50% of our students are supported by IEP or 504 plans. As a High School, we often inherit these plans from their previous schools. Our case managers each have around 20 students on their caseload. Our team works to provide support to our students in the most efficient and effective ways we are able. Students are drawn to PiM for our high quality arts programming, but many parents find our smaller school population of around 350 students to be a big draw compared to the huge districts around us, especially for students who deal with depression, anxiety, or students on the Autism Spectrum. We regularly hear from parents how our school setting "saved their student" because they finally felt safe, or seen.

In my school, reductions in special education funding and operating revenue for our students would mean staffing reductions and a reduction of services. With our current budget, we would be looking at \$80,000-100,000 - this may not seem like much in the context of the big box districts around us, but for us this is a major impact to our ability to offer what the students who arrive at our door require. This would directly impact the experience and growth of our students. One of the talking points I have heard around Charter School Special Education is that we run "Cadillac" Programs- to use this comparison, I would say we run a base model "Toyota Camry" program - very dependable, will not break down often, and gets our students where they need to go. We continue to work creatively in the limited budget environment we have always experienced.

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,



Matt McFarlane
Executive Director
PiM Arts High School