

Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

We are writing to express our support for the additional school-linked mental health grants funding included in SF928. These grants play a critical role in ensuring that students with the highest levels of need receive the support necessary for their well-being, mental health, and academic success.

School-linked mental health grants have been instrumental in helping the four Intermediate School Districts address the growing mental health needs of our most vulnerable students by allowing us to:

- Support the mental and behavioral health of students requiring the highest levels of services within our school districts.
- Provide flexible, responsive, and adaptive mental health programming to meet the unique needs of each Intermediate School District.
- Strengthen collaboration with community providers, intensifying wraparound services for students both in school and in the broader community.
- Enhance communication and coordination among the four Intermediate School Districts, the Department of Human Services, and community providers, leading to scalable solutions and advocacy for students with intensive mental and behavioral health needs.
- Implement innovative programs to meet our students' mental health needs, collect data, and make data-driven decisions to assess and improve the effectiveness of mental health services.

Reducing this critical funding would significantly hinder our ability to innovate, implement, and sustain our effective programs. These dollars have allowed the Intermediate School Districts to remain responsive to the evolving needs of students with the highest needs.

We urge you to support the continued funding of school-linked mental health grants in SF928 to protect and enhance the critical services that serve our most vulnerable students.

