



September 16, 2025

Dear Sen. Latz, Sen. Mohamed, and members of the Senate Gun Violence Prevention Working Group,

This time of year should be filled with the excitement of children returning to school eager to learn, friends and teachers reconnecting, and parents feeling both relieved and nostalgic as their little ones grow. But on August 27, that joy was shattered by gunfire at Annunciation Catholic School, leaving families fearful and schools feeling unsafe. We stand with students, parents, advocates, nonprofit leaders, and countless Minnesotans in saying: you, our legislators, have a moral obligation to act on this crisis in a swift, meaningful, and community-centered way.

Gun violence is an education crisis. Learning cannot happen when gun violence threatens our children's wellbeing. A child cannot focus on reading or math when they are practicing lockdown drills. Teachers cannot inspire curiosity when they must plan for how to shield their students from bullets. Schools are meant to be sanctuaries of growth and opportunity. Instead, gun violence is forcing them into spaces of trauma and survival. That is why this committee's work must be seen as central to protecting our children and our education system itself.

Communities and families are looking to the Legislature to lead on school and student safety, not only within school walls, but also by addressing the conditions that contribute to security and wellbeing in our broader, surrounding communities. Minnesota has a chance to lead the nation in response to this tragedy, but only if we act with courage. This must include immediate action on commonsense gun control laws and robust mental health supports, alongside long-term strategies to strengthen school safety and climate. If partisan rhetoric prevails over student-centered action, we will have failed our children. This moment demands bold and immediate solutions. Proposals now before this work group are an important start. Until we take decisive steps to reduce gun violence, no measure can truly make our children safe. When students move through school experiencing more active shooter drills than field trips, inaction is unacceptable. We must take courageous steps to mitigate the risks students face when a combination of disconnection, alienation, and easy access to high-capacity weapons continues to create a recipe for tragedy. When it comes to the safety of our children, the solution cannot be either common sense gun control or mental health supports, but both/and.

We urge you to broaden this conversation to what it means to create safe and welcoming school environments by centering student voice in those discussions. We cannot create supportive and inclusive school climates where students feel both physically secure and emotionally cared for without the guidance of our most impacted group—our students. Without students, we worry that concerning policies that criminalize, traumatize, and push students out in the name of "safety" will do anything but keep our kids safe. Rhetoric about "hardening schools" cannot replace meaningful strategies that foster belonging, inclusion, and mental health support.

We call on you to rise to this moment, center the voices of Minnesota students, and take bold, collaborative action to ensure every child can walk into school feeling safe, welcome, and protected.

Sincerely,
Joshua Crosson
Executive Director