



September 12, 2025

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Lisa Demuth, Speaker
Centennial Building, 2nd floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Erin Murphy, Senate Majority Leader
3113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55103

Rep. Zack Stephenson, DFL Leader
Centennial Building, 4th Floor
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Mark Johnson, Senate Republican Leader
2401 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Gov. Walz, Lt. Gov. Flanagan, and Legislative Leaders:

We write on behalf of our organizations in the aftermath of the tragic school shootings at Annunciation School in Minneapolis regarding potential convening of a Special Session.

Together, our organizations represent nonpublic schools serving more than 72,000 students across Minnesota's urban, suburban, and rural communities. Our schools are diverse and represent both religious schools – Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths – and schools with no religious affiliation.

School safety is a concern for every school—public, nonpublic, charter, and tribal. When one school is vulnerable, all schools are vulnerable. Parents, students, educators, and volunteers deserve a clear commitment from the State of Minnesota that resources will be invested to protect every child and adult in our schools.

The tragedy at Annunciation School must never be repeated in our state.

As you consider a Special Session this Fall, and as you prepare for the regular session convening on February 17, 2026, we respectfully urge you to appropriate additional resources to address critical gaps in ensuring that all schools are adequately prepared and protected.

We support strengthening the **Safe Schools Revenue Program** (See Minn. Stat. 126C.44) and expanding access so nonpublic, tribal, and charter schools may also participate. Specifically, we recommend:

- Extending program eligibility to nonpublic, charter, and tribal schools, with at least **\$100 per enrolled student** in state aid.
- Increasing state aid and school board approved levy authority to ensure school districts have sustainable resources to meet ongoing safety needs.

Providing state aid for school safety to protect students and adults in nonpublic and tribal schools is both constitutional and is not without precedent. For example, in the state of New York, religious and independent schools are guaranteed \$165/pupil for expenses related to health, safety and security expenses. In the state of New Jersey, nonpublic school security aid is funded at a per pupil rate of \$205/student.

There are many other states offering funding for nonpublic school security grant programs including but not limited to California, Maryland, Michigan, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and Indiana.

School safety investments must be **permanent, predictable, and sufficient for all schools**. One-time grants or competitive programs, while helpful to some schools, are not enough to ensure consistent and equitable safety across all Minnesota schools.

School safety measures are not the only answer to gun violence. The respective organizations have a variety of viewpoints on holistic approaches to addressing gun violence in our state. But we are united that school safety funding for all students is an imperative. School safety funding is about ensuring all our students learn in a safe environment.

We stand ready to collaborate with you on legislation to advance these critical protections for our students, staff, and communities.

Sincerely,

Tim Benz
President
MINNDEPENDENT

Jason Adkins
Executive Director
Minnesota Catholic Conference

Steve Hunegs
Executive Director
Jewish Community Relations Council

Zaheer Baber
President
Islamic Center of
Minnesota

Dan Beckering
President
ACSI

James C. Davis, Jr.
Education Superintendent
Minnesota Conference of Seventh-day
Adventists

C: Representative Cheryl Youakim
Representative Ron Kresha
Representative Kelly Moller
Representative Paul Novotny
Senator Mary Kunesh
Senator Jason Rarick
Senator Ron Latz
Senator Warren Limmer