



March 4, 2021

Dear Members of the Education Policy Committee:

NAMI Minnesota strongly supports HF1083 which would establish a lead position within the Minnesota Department of Education focused on mental health. The number one issue facing many schools is students' mental health.

We believe that there needs to be a lead person within MDE to assist schools in addressing students' mental health. This includes helping them know how to establish school-linked mental health services within a building if there is not a grant available, ideas for good training on mental health and mental illnesses for teachers and staff, and recommendations for education curricula for youth on mental health. It also should include assistance on what to do after a suicide so as to not promote contagion and helping all school districts develop robust policies on suicide prevention and response.

Schools need a person to contact within MDE when they have these questions, and we need a person within MDE to promote best practices. This is not a person within safe schools (sends the wrong message) or simply health. This is a specific area of expertise that is needed in our state.

Please support HF 1083 so that schools know where to go to obtain resources and support in addressing students' mental health. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director



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