

Written testimony for: House Education Policy Omnibus Bill meeting on 3-10-21

From: Kelly Kayser, resident of Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

Date: March 9, 2021

RE: Opposition to new homeschool language in HF1081DE1.pdf

I am writing in opposition to the addition of the following language:

“A letter of intent to continue to provide instruction must include a report to the superintendent with proof that the testing plan for the previous year was fulfilled as agreed upon, a copy of the official test scores, and information required in paragraph (a) for each student for the upcoming school year.” [Article 2, Sec. 4, Subdivision 1, Paragraph (b), found on page 9 of the pdf]

Approximately ten years ago, Minnesota passed the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill, which significantly simplified reporting requirements for the state’s homeschool families. The bill also relieved local school districts of the need to receive and retain unnecessary paperwork. The fact that reporting requirements were relaxed rather than tightened is a testament to the integrity and quality of education in Minnesota’s homeschool community.

Since that time, I have interacted with homeschool families from all walks of life and have yet to meet one that does not make their children’s education a top priority. Minnesota’s homeschooled students are typically bright, articulate, and highly capable in diverse situations; their parents are ever-mindful of the quality and quantity of educational opportunities they provide for their children. For most, home education is a 24/7 activity, driven by more – not less.

Is it possible that the increase in homeschooling that is reportedly occurring in response to public school shutdowns during the pandemic could be driving this push for additional documentation? If so, there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that new homeschool parents would be any less diligent than those who are already educating at home.

Furthermore, submitting test scores is an unfair burden on homeschools, as other private schools are not required to submit their students’ test scores to any public school district. The onus of the proposed language suggests that that the state does not believe or trust that homeschool parents strive to ensure their children will be intelligent, contributing members of society as adults. Frankly, such a notion is offensive and could not be further from the truth.

With a decades-long history of homeschool success in Minnesota, it seems the resources of local school districts would be better focused on outcomes for the students who attend school in their own buildings. **It is for all the reasons outlined here that I strongly urge the striking of the proposed language listed above from the Omnibus Bill.**

Please know that your public service to our state is sincerely appreciated.