



Representative Ron Kresha, Chair
Education Finance Committee
March 5, 2025

Chair Kresha and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of professional organizations representing school support personnel and the Mental Health Legislative Network, we are writing to share our concerns about House File 957. This language would allow school districts to shift funding away from school support personnel funding.

Our membership organizations include the Minnesota School Social Work Association (MSSWA), the Minnesota School Psychologists Association (MSPA), the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota (SNOM), and the Minnesota School Counselor Association (MSCA). Collectively, our members work as a team to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of students in Minnesota.

In 2023, the Legislature dedicated funding for schools to expand the positions of school social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, and chemical health counselors so that we can address the increasingly complex student needs that show up in schools across MN every day.

Because there is likely agreement about the importance of maintaining these licensed professionals in every building, we caution against the fund transfers as laid out in HF957. The intent of the 2023 legislation was to increase staffing capacity to better address the mental health and social emotional needs of students. In contrast, this language would allow the funding to be used for any purpose without an ability for local families to object or require full transparency.

While students' have many needs and many supports in various adults in schools, the roles student support professionals play are fundamentally different. While all staff are necessary, research has shown that increasing mental health resources and supportive interventions can reduce disciplinary issues.

We recognize the desire to give financial flexibility to school districts in a time of stretched resources. Yet, it is for this reason we urge caution before dissolving the purpose of school support personnel funding with school safety aid. Keeping the funding dedicated to student support personnel ensures that schools have the resources to invest in dedicated support services while still allowing districts to make informed decisions about safety measures based on their individual needs.

We appreciate your support of students in Minnesota, and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you as you develop the most effective ways to fund their needs.

Sincerely,

Jessie Kember, President, Damion Smith, Past-President, & Sarah Wollersheim Shervey,
Legislative Chair

MN School Psychology Association

Julie Campanelli, LICSW, Ed.S, President & Christy McCoy, MSW, LICSW, Legislative Chair,
MN School Social Workers Association

Calli Moreau, Board Chair; Sydney Piras, Board Chair-Elect, Marguerite Ohrtman & Carolyn
Berger, Advocacy Co-Chairs,

MN School Counselor Association

Tara Cliff, School Nurse Organization of Minnesota