



April 15, 2026

Representative Cheryl Youakim, Co- Chair
Representative Ron Kresha, Co-Chair
House Education Finance Committee
Centennial Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Youakim and Kresha,

Thank you for your service and leadership to the House Education Finance Committee. Together, our respective organizations represent more than 250 nonpublic schools, educating more than 50,000 students.

We write to voice our strong opposition to proposals found in Governor Walz's proposed K12 education budget. Specifically, we oppose the stipulation that would fully eliminate all nonpublic pupil aids and nonpublic pupil transportation services if the State of Minnesota opts-into the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit (FSTC), under Public Law 119-21, section 70411.

Minnesota has a long history of respecting educational pluralism and providing essential services for students irrespective of school setting. Minn. Stat. 123B.40 states, "It is the intent of the legislature to provide for distribution of educational aids such as textbooks, standardized tests and pupil support services so that **every school pupil in the state will share equitably in education benefits and therefore further assure all Minnesota pupils and their parents freedom of choice in education.**"

In addition, Minn. Stat. 123B.84 states, "In districts where the state provides aids for **transportation it is in the public interest to provide equality of treatment in transporting school children of the state who are required to attend elementary and secondary schools pursuant to chapter 120A, so that the health, welfare and safety of the children, while using the public highways of the state, shall be protected.**"

These vital services established five decades ago with strong bipartisan support, advance the concept of providing equitable support to all students is the right thing to do for students. Minnesota is known for taking care of its citizens and eliminating these services (administered by and funded through public schools) runs in conflict with the common good.

Even in the leanest budget years, there were never legislative proposals to cut these services. Yet, for the second consecutive year, Gov. Walz is again proposing to eliminate this important aid that serves students directly. We find it very concerning that one segment of students would be singled out to have certain essential services taken from them simply because of school choice.

Notably, the state opt in on the federal scholarship tax credit in exchange for these harmful cuts does not have any fiscal impact on the state budget. It is also very likely that the number of students served, and total dollars generated, by the federal tax credit scholarship program, will disproportionately assist students in *public* schools. The Governor's proposal seems similar to the concept of "Heads I win, Tails you lose." We ask you to protect these vital services for students in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Benz
President
MINNDEPENDENT

Jason Adkins, Esq.
Executive Director and General Counsel
Minnesota Catholic Conference

CC: Members of the House Education Finance Committee