



Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair  
Human Services Committee  
March 29, 2023

Chair Youakim and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, MN Chapter (NASW-MN) and the MN School Social Work Association (MSSWA), we are writing in support of several components in House File 2497.

NASW-MN is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in our state, representing over 2000 social workers, and MSSWA is a professional group who advance the practice of school social work in MN. Collectively, our organizations offer experience and expertise in children’s mental health and wellness in schools.

We appreciate the hard work of your committee balancing the many needs in schools through House File 2497. Specifically, we are grateful for your attention in several key areas:

- Article 5, Section 63 and 66: This component appropriates funding for school support personnel. School social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, and chemical health counselors work together to address the increasingly complex student needs that show up in schools across MN every day. This provides important funding to schools so they can maintain a team of these professionals in every building.
- Article 7, Section 18: This component will allow reimbursement through Federal Medicaid for the services school social workers provide to eligible students as part of a comprehensive evaluation process and an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Reforming the reimbursement process will allow school districts to access needed federal funds for our schools that social workers qualified as mental health providers and practitioners are already providing.
- Article 12, Section 14: This component appropriates funding for a comprehensive school mental health services lead. This added position allows an extra resource for schools when they need to coordinate extraordinary mental health support when outside trauma comes inside school buildings.

Social workers are trained in the practice of understanding the connection between a person’s behavior and the environment in which they live. Students' lives at home and at school are connected, and supporting mental health positively impacts learning. The measures included in House File 2497 expand the capacity of school social workers to use their unique skills to ensure that students have the necessary support in other areas of their life so they can achieve their full academic potential in the classroom.

Thank you for your inclusion of these items in House File 2497.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director  
NASW-MN

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