



April 12, 2024

Chair Cheryl Youakim
443 State Office Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

OutFront Minnesota thanks the House Education Finance Committee for their support of HF 3682 (Kotzya-Witthuhn) The Health Standards bill within HF 5237, the Education Finance Omnibus bill. We believe that this legislation is important to bringing comprehensive, modern, and inclusive health education to all Minnesota students.

The Health Standards bill (HF 3682) would designate the Commissioner of Education to begin the rulemaking process to adopt statewide academic standards in health. The establishment of such standards would take actionable steps toward ensuring that all Minnesotans are equipped with the knowledge and skills for healthy relationships and lives. Furthermore, these standards aim to center the wellbeing of young people and provide the necessary tools to make informed decisions and positive impacts on themselves and their peers throughout their lifespan.

It is proven that age-appropriate comprehensive and inclusive sexual education curriculum, as part of the health education requirement, is beneficial for the long-term health and awareness of *all* students. The inclusion of culturally-sensitive and LGBTQ+ health education is proven to lower the rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), substance usage, violence, and more amongst young people and students as well as improve their mental and behavioral health. The Health Standards bill will also further Minnesota's leader as a national leader in education.

OutFront Minnesota is encouraged by inclusion of HF 3682 within HF 5237, the Education Finance Omnibus bill. We seek to support and empower *all* students in becoming their best and healthiest selves, and this bill advances those goals; and supports the health of students, families, and our communities. OutFront Minnesota thanks you for your support for HF 3682 the Health Standards bill.

Sincerely,

Karlton A. Laster
Director, Policy & Organizing

April 14, 2024

House Education Finance Chair Youakim,

I am writing on behalf of RHA (Reproductive Health Alliance) to voice our strong support of including the Health Standards (HF3682) in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill.

RHA is a coalition of more than 40 reproductive and sexual health clinics, advocacy organizations and individuals across the state of Minnesota. Our clinics are designated as essential community providers by the Minnesota Department of Health. We provide affordable access to medical care including contraception, HIV and STI testing and treatment and evidence-based information to the most vulnerable populations across the state.

We support comprehensive health education standards. In fact, one of our strategic priorities for 2024 is to foster messaging around medically accurate, evidence-based health information.

Comprehensive health education standards are important to reproductive and sexual health work, ultimately aiding students in making informed choices about their health and well-being. The lack of a requirement to provide comprehensive, medically accurate sexual and reproductive health education has had dire consequences for youth and young adults in our communities. At a time when all of MN is seeing a continued epidemic of chlamydia, and resurgence of syphilis and gonorrhea, youth account for a disproportionate number of cases (6.5% of population making up 24% of chlamydia cases and 14% of gonorrhea).¹

The 2023 legislative increase in funding and change in language to the SRHS grant (Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, formerly FPSP) allows RHA clinics, including school-based clinics, to provide medically accurate education in K-12 schools in MN.

Revised health education standards that include evidence-based health information are critical to helping Minnesota students strengthen their health literacy skills. We strongly support including HF 3682 in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill.

Sincerely,

Jill Collins

Jill Collins, MPH
Board Co-Chair, RHA

¹. MDH, STD and HIV/AIDS Surveillance System. Surveillance Statistics 2021



April 12, 2024

Members of the House Education Finance Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Inclusion of health standards language in omnibus package

Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

Pro-Choice Minnesota would like to offer our gratitude for your inclusion of health standards language in the omnibus bill. Pro-Choice Minnesota's mission is to build collective power to remove barriers, strengthen protections, and expand access to abortion and all reproductive healthcare in Minnesota. We believe that every person has the right to make choices about their body's reproduction, free from restriction and oppression. Reproductive freedom hinges on individuals understanding their own reproductive health. Without this knowledge, bodily autonomy lacks its full power, and full access to reproductive healthcare remains inaccessible.

This health standards language takes actionable steps toward ensuring that all Minnesotans are equipped with the knowledge and skills to attain their highest level of health. Furthermore, these standards aim to center the wellbeing of young people and provide the necessary tools to make informed decisions and positive impacts on themselves and their peers throughout their lifespan.

As a non-profit with a focus on the holistic health of our community members, establishing statewide health standards will empower Minnesotans to live safer and healthier lives and have long-term benefits across the state. Pro-Choice Minnesota respectfully thanks you for your dedication to these efforts.

In Community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "maggie meyers". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Maggie Meyers (she/her)
Executive Director
Pro-Choice Minnesota



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

April 15, 2024

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives Education Finance Committee,

We write with full support and gratitude for HF5237, the Education Finance Budget Bill.

At the YMCA Center for Youth Voice, we are committed to preserving Minnesota's strong civic culture by helping young people understand our system of government and how to effectively use their voice to take action on issues that matter to them. **Because democracy must be learned by each generation.**

Through the eight programs we offer directly (Minnesota YMCA Youth in Government, YMCA Model United Nations, Respectful Conversations in Schools, Student Election Judge Network, Students Voting, Youth Day at the Capitol, National Judicial Competition, and YMCA Youth Conference on National Affairs) and many others we support and partner on, we are strongly committed to equipping young people with the skills they need to be strong participants in our civic society. We offer year-round opportunities that allow students to engage in both low-intensity and high-intensity programming. We are radically nonpartisan and welcoming to students of all backgrounds, opinions, and areas of the state. Research has shown that youth civic engagement often leads to increased academic performance and improved social-emotional well-being. It helps young people build skills and networks that are valued in the workplace and can become a source of economic mobility. When young people feel equipped and empowered to act – and when they see their efforts achieve positive change – it can have a profound and lasting impact.

The \$150,000 appropriated in HF5237 to the YMCA Center for Youth Voice will allow us to make significant investments in expanding our conference scholarship and meal assistance funds which in turn, helps us reach more diverse student populations from across the state. Ensuring broad representation of lived experiences and perspectives among our student participants is a top priority for us and this investment makes a significant contribution towards that goal.

On behalf of our students, staff, alumni, and partners, thank you for meaningful investment in the future community and civic leaders of our state.

Sincerely,

Amy Anderson
Executive Director
YMCA Center for Youth Voice

CENTER FOR YOUTH VOICE

2100 White Bear Avenue, Maplewood, MN 55109
P 612 823 1381 W ymcayouthvoice.org



April 15th, 2024

Members of the House Education Finance Committee

Chair Cheryl Youakim and Members of the Education Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Young Women's Initiative Cabinet (YWIC), the Policy Track wants to express our support for the Health Standards Bill HF 3682 now in the Omnibus Bill. The YWIC is appointed by the Office of the Governor and Lt. Governor, and consists of 10 young women and youth leaders (ages 16-24) from eight communities across Minnesota. We ensure that the work of the Young Women's Initiative stays grounded in the lived experiences of the young women and youth from each community and the community-specific challenges. The Cabinet engages in leadership development with YWCA St. Paul, and train as policy advocates to advance equity in our communities.

Today we are writing in support of HF3682, which would ensure that all students in Minnesota would receive accurate health education; thus, causing them to be more informed and equipped to make their own decisions in regards to their health. Setting this bill to the state level would make health education more accessible and would help spread awareness of topics like violence prevention, mental health, substance abuse, and reproductive health. Having these topics implemented into education is crucial for young Minnesotans as it is important for their mental, physical, and emotional well being.

As mentioned the YWIC is made up of young women across Minnesota ranging from ages 16-26. We are from diverse backgrounds and share many different perspectives and life experiences. However, one experience we can all relate to is sitting through a high school health class. As young high schoolers, we experienced a lack of discussion surrounding reproductive health and resources for other health topics like mental health and substance abuse. These topics were briefly addressed, spending no more than a class period lecturing about anatomy and abstinence. One key component that was missing was the handful of resources for reproductive health care and substance abuse programs that Minnesota has to offer. Learning about these resources is vital for students to understand their health and to prioritize their well being. As a youth-led organization with a focus on addressing the needs of women and girls in our state, establishing statewide health standards will empower youth of Minnesota to live safer and healthier lives. Therefore the Young Women's Initiative Cabinet respectfully requests your support for HF 3682.

Sincerely,

The Young Women's Cabinet



April 12, 2024

Members of the House Education Finance Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Inclusion of health standards language in omnibus package

Dear Members of the Committee:

The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault would like to offer our gratitude for your inclusion of health standards language in the omnibus bill. MNCASA is a statewide membership coalition driving transformative culture change to address sexual violence through advocacy, prevention, racial justice, and systems change. MNCASA acts as a collective voice of organizations and individuals committed to ending sexual violence.

This health standards language takes actionable steps toward ensuring that all Minnesotans are equipped with the knowledge and skills to attain their highest level of health. Furthermore, these standards aim to center the wellbeing of young people and provide the necessary tools to make informed decisions and positive impacts on themselves and their peers throughout their lifespan.

As a coalition with a focus on the public health of our community members, establishing statewide health standards will empower Minnesotans to live safer and healthier lives and have long-term benefits across the state. MNCASA respectfully thanks you for your dedication on these efforts.

In Community,

PaHoua Vang
Interim Executive Director, MNCASA

Sarah Florman
Public Policy Manager, MNCASA

April 15, 2024

Dear Chair Youakim and House Education Finance Committee Members:

The Minnesota Private College Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on HF 5237 DE2, on behalf of our 18-member institutions.

While we strongly support the committee's interest in forming a pilot program to compensate student teachers for their time during the 12-week student teaching period, we are disappointed to see that students at nonprofit institutions are not included in the pilot program.

Fifteen of our 18 member institutions have teacher preparation programs and 45% of licensed teachers receive an undergraduate degree from a nonprofit college or university. These future teachers are integral to the teacher workforce and should be included in any paid student teaching program the committee considers.

We ask that a pilot program include a balance of the types of institutions that contribute to the teacher workforce in Minnesota. Please consider including nonprofit colleges in the pilot program.

Paid student teaching is such an important step to supporting future teachers. Thank you for considering this request as you markup HF 5237 DE2.

We look forward to working with you, Chair Youakim, and the committee.

Sincerely,



Alison Groebner
Director Of Government and Community Relations



April 15, 2024

The Honorable Cheryl Youakim
Chair, House Education Finance Committee
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Youakim and Committee Members:

The Minnesota Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) is writing in support of the inclusion of the Health Standards provisions within your Education Finance Omnibus bill.

ACOG is the main organization representing and supporting obstetricians and gynecologists in Minnesota. ACOG produces practice guidelines for health care professionals, and educational materials for patients, provides practice management and career support, facilitates programs and initiatives to improve women's health, and advocates for members and patients.

Our members see first-hand the importance of data-driven, evidence-based health education for our patients and their families. Our state and communities are seeing a rise in syphilis and tragically congenital syphilis, among other rising sexually transmitted diseases and conditions. The Minnesota Section of ACOG has recently partnered with the Minnesota Department of Health to push out increased syphilis screening and education among our members. More is needed, though, and increased education in schools is vital to combat this epidemic.

This bill is critically needed to ensure Minnesota's youth are receiving the information they need to be aware of health risks and to be able to make important, informed health choices.

Thank you for including this important provision in your bill.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Slagle, MD
MN ACOG Chair

April 15, 2024

Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, we are writing with our comments on HF5237, the education supplemental budget omnibus bill. We are grateful for the attention being paid to school attendance. We support the Student Attendance Pilot Program and the Student Attendance and Truancy Legislative Study Group. Children's mental health is an essential part of improving and maintaining good school attendance.

The first duty of the legislative study group is to study "current statutory requirements relating to student attendance and truancy." One issue we have encountered is a requirement in section 126C.05 that students who have been absent for more than 15 consecutive days must be withdrawn from school. This is a prime example of the confusion and difficulty families experience by obscure laws. It makes sense that attendance and funding are linked in many ways. However, a blanket rule that students be dropped after an arbitrary number of days does nothing to incentivize schools to maintain productive relationships with families, nor does it help families who are already struggling. In fact, it unnecessarily exposes families to risks like child protection involvement and other systemic barriers.

We are also supportive of health and mental health curriculum requirements and to have a statewide approach. Education is a key element of our mission, and it truly makes a difference in early intervention and prevention. It is especially important that students learn evidence-based practices around suicide prevention and postvention. Young people are more aware of mental health now more than ever, and they are seeking help more than ever as well. Education around mental health and substance use disorders will go a long way in promoting wellness all across our state.

We are also supportive of continuing to support paraprofessionals, who play such important roles in our schools. It is extremely important to continue accessible training for paraprofessionals and to ensure that we have culturally informed workers.

Thank you for your time and attention. We are happy to be a resource to committee on any mental health topics.

Sincerely,

Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director

Elliot Butay
Senior Public Policy Coordinator



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT

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April 15, 2024

Representative Cheryl Youakim
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Youakim,

We are writing in enthusiastic support of the Student Attendance Pilot Program being proposed to improve student attendance in Minnesota public schools. Mankato Area Public Schools was cited by the Minnesota Department of Education last year as a district in need of improvement. Since then, we have increased our efforts to work collaboratively with our community partners to strategize innovative ways to engage students and families to improve attendance amongst our students, specifically students who are unhoused and students of color. We continue to see this as one of our top priorities in order to improve our efforts to engage students in their learning environments.

We look forward to the possibility of working to develop even more innovative strategies to increase student attendance across our schools. We are very appreciative of being considered for this important pilot program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Peterson".

Paul Peterson
Superintendent

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Hare".

Scott Hare
Director of Student Support Services



One91 School District Office

Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District
200 W. Burnsville Pkwy
Burnsville, MN 55337
952-707-2000

April 15, 2024

Dear Representative Cheryl Youakim:

I am writing this letter in support of the Student Attendance Pilot Project and sincerely hope that the resolution passes in the final Education Finance bill working its way through the Minnesota Legislature this year. Absenteeism has been a growing concern for the district that I serve, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191, especially as we've come out of the COVID pandemic. Now is the time to get ahead of this trend.

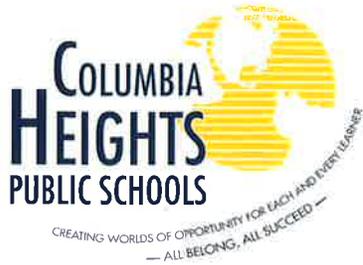
As an educator for nearly 40 years, I can say without a doubt that reducing absenteeism can be one of the simplest and most effective ways to improve academic success for all students. We welcome the opportunity to partner in a project that can help our district find and implement innovative strategies to help us improve in this critical area. It will be instrumental that we work collectively and collaboratively with other districts in the pilot program to develop solutions for the complex reasons children are missing school.

I want to personally thank you for your work and attention to this important issue facing schools today. I'm hopeful that the proposed Student Attendance Pilot Project will help us make great strides in improving attendance in District 191.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa Battle".

Dr. Theresa Battle
Superintendent of Schools



ZENA STENVIK

Superintendent of Schools

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StenvikZ@colheights.k12.mn.us

April 15, 2024

To: Minnesota House Education Finance Committee

I am pleased to write this letter in support of the Student Attendance Pilot Project because it is designed to help schools decrease absenteeism and keep children in school. The research is clear that regular attendance at school leads to better academic achievement. Students miss school for many different reasons and each family has unique experiences with and reasons for absenteeism.

The absenteeism rate in Columbia Heights Public Schools is much too high. We have sent information to families about why attendance matters, however emails and newsletters alone have not been enough to improve our attendance rates.

Our student support team, made up of social workers and school psychologists have a list of strategies the Student Attendance Pilot Project would support in our district. The strategies include:

1. Offer transportation as a solution to attendance issues for chronically absent students who live on the edge of our walking boundary.
2. Establish a 6:00 am health line for parents to confer with health personnel regarding their child's illness and symptoms to determine if they are well enough to come to school that day.
3. Hire a staff person to help with emails, phone calls, and relationships because reaching out personally to students' families who are struggling with attendance is much more likely to make an impact than generic letters and auto calls
4. Reinstate Check & Connect, a research-based program created at the University of Minnesota- a program we had to cut due to budget short falls.
5. The "Walking School Bus" which is a staff person who walks with groups of young children to make sure they get to school.

Columbia Heights Public Schools is prepared to participate in the Student Attendance Pilot Project cohort beginning in the 2024-25 school year. The funding and collaborative support from the cohort will no doubt make a positive impact in the lives of our students and families.

Sincerely,



Zena Stenvik, Superintendent

Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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April 16, 2024

Chair Cheryl Youakim
Education Finance Committee
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Youakim,

On behalf of the over 1,000 members of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing to thank you for including HF 3682 in your omnibus bill.

This bill aims to improve the academic standards for Minnesota's students to include elements necessary for a well-rounded health education. Kids today are facing multiple challenges to their mental and physical health, and the earlier we can teach them about how to take care of their own health and wellbeing, the better.

In recent years, Minnesota has seen increased rates of mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety among adolescents, higher rates of eating disorders, childhood obesity, and diseases such as type 2 diabetes among school-aged children, higher rates of STIs, and increased rates of emotional and sexual abuse among youth of all ages.

Additionally, Minnesota's kids need to be educated about how to live a healthy life in the year 2024 and beyond. In a world filled with access to vaping and cannabis products marketed towards children, where every kid has multiple social media accounts, and where any child who is old enough to type can expose themselves to all the information and open communication of the internet; the next generation of Minnesotans needs this legislation.

This bill would help ensure children and families from every corner of the state will receive consistent education related not only to their own health, but that of their family and community, and I am grateful for its inclusion in your omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eileen Crespo".

Eileen Crespo, MD, FAAP
President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics