



MASE builds strong leaders who work on behalf of students with disabilities.

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Madam Chair Youakim and members of the Education Finance Committee:

This letter is written on behalf of the members of the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education in regards to HF 1175. This bill is vital to provide the necessary funding for mental health professionals providing services to students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Minnesota School Districts are obligated to bill Medical Assistance for services provided as part of special education. Currently Minnesota school districts are able to bill for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, nursing services, and personal care attendant services based on the medical determination as part of the special education evaluation process. However, only six school districts in Minnesota bill for services provided by mental health professionals. The reason for this is that the current model of the Children's Therapeutic Supports and Services (CTSS) requires extensive duplicative requirements.

As part of the special education process students have a comprehensive evaluation process determines the needs of students using a variety of education professionals (including mental health professionals when mental health concerns are noted). This process aligns very closely with the Diagnostic Assessment.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released a bulletin in August of this year encouraging states to avoid this duplicative administrative burden or requiring a mental health diagnosis.

By passing this bill, it will provide more than \$10 million in federal funds at no cost to the state of Minnesota. With the significant cross subsidy that is reducing resources available to all students across the state, we must pass this bill to help reduce the cross subsidy.

Sincerely,

Minnesota Administrators for Special Education