



March 13th, 2023

To Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance Committee,

My name is Ed Fellows and I am the executive director at Gateway STEM Academy. Our K-8 charter school is located in Burnsville, MN and serves approximately 200 at-risk African-American students with high percentage of students qualifying as English Language Learners.

I am writing a letter of support for HF 345 that outlines a pilot program with Pillsbury United Communities to improve educational outcomes and accountability in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education.

HF 345 is important to schools that participate in this pilot program for many reasons. As a school that provides education to students that may come from challenging socio-economic backgrounds and have high mobility rates within their schooling experience, it is important that there is an encompassing framework to have schools be held accountable in ways that are outlined in the pilot framework.

The proposed framework in HF 345 allows for educational accountability to go beyond the scope of test scores and empowers schools be accountable for all aspects of a student's educational experience during the school year for enrolled students.

Critical factors such as student attendance, student engagement, individual student's social emotional health, family engagement, and board governance are important factors in helping create a robust framework for student success while allowing for accountability of all stakeholders of a school.

I am hopeful that our legislators vote yes to support HF 345 and see this unique initiative as a way to improve systems of educational accountability that will benefit teachers, families, and most importantly, students.

Thanks in advance for your time and consideration of voting yes for HF 345.

Regards,

Ed Fellows
Executive Director
Gateway STEM Academy