

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

April 04, 2022

Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Davnie and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities, we are writing to express support for provisions in House File 4300, Representative Davnie's Omnibus Education Finance bill. We thank the chair for the focus on funding for special education, support staff, mental health, and training on non-exclusionary principles and policies. We support the following provisions in the Omnibus Finance Bill that provide:

- Definitions and reporting on pupil withdrawal agreements, non-exclusionary discipline language, prohibition of dismissals for K-3, funding for training on non-exclusionary discipline (Article 2 Section 2, 33-44, Article 3 Section 28)
- Prohibition of withholding recess as form of punishment (Article 2 Section 14, 44)
- Restrictive Procedures modifications (Article 2 Section 69 -72)
- Two hours of training in mental illness (Article 3 Section 5)
- Teacher Prep time for due process paperwork (Article 3 Section 20, Section 34 subd. 3)
- Modifying the age to receive special education services to 22 and increases age of services to age 23 for next year (Article 5 Section 2)
- Paid time for training for paraprofessionals and time to review IEPs (Article 5 Section 3)
- Funding for Paraprofessional training (Article 5 Section 4)
- Funding towards eliminating the special education cross subsidy (Article 5 Section 5)
- Legislative Working Group on Special Education Billing (Article 5 Section 8)
- Anti-bullying provisions (Article 6 Section 2-4)
- Funding for Student Support Personnel Aid (Article 6 Section 8)
- Comprehensive School Mental Health Services Leads to have minimum two positions at schools (Article 6 Section 9)

Coalition for Children with Disabilities

The Arc Minnesota • Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center • Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance
PACER Center • Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota
Proof Alliance



April 4, 2022

Dear Members of the Education Finance Committee:

On behalf of NAMI Minnesota, I want to offer our comments on the omnibus education finance and policy bill. First, please accept our gratitude for the investments to support students' mental health. We know that our children and youth were negatively impacted by the pandemic, and we have seen increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. All systems must be on board to help address their mental health needs. These are the sections we support.

Article One:

- Section 2: Providing access to menstrual products
- Sections 30-32: Allowing online learning for students in care and treatment facilities with parental agreement. It might be easier for these students to stay connected to their home school and not fall behind as much.
- Section 34: Funding extended time for students in residential treatment.

Article Two:

- Section 33: Not allowing students in k-3 to be suspended without trying additional nonexclusionary policies and practices. Especially after the pandemic, these young students need additional help and social emotional learning.
- Sections 35-42: Language related to suspensions. It's important that we keep students who are suspended connected to school and their classwork so as not to fall further behind. It also makes sense to help the student learn different ways to react to situations by connecting them with social emotional learning, mental health services, etc. We support not using suspension to punish truancy. Having a system so that families can file complaints on how a student is disciplined is also important to ensure policies are implemented equitably.
- Section 43: The more detailed approach to not allowing students to participate in recess as a punishment or consequence. It's so important for students to "move" for their physical and mental health.
- Section 69-72: Expanding the restrictions on the use of restrictive procedures to all students, not just special education students. We also support expanding the responsibilities of the oversight committees to look at issues such as racial disparities in the use of these procedures and the use of school resource officers. It is a best practice to debrief after the use of these procedures, so we support adding information about the debriefing policy.

Article Three:

- Section 5: Requiring administrators – like teachers – to have at least two hours of training on suicide prevention and mental illnesses in children.
- Section 28: Providing additional funds for training on nonexclusionary discipline procedures.



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Article Five:

- Section 3 and 4: Providing funding to support paraprofessionals obtaining training and being provided the time to learn more about the specific needs of a student with whom they will be working.

Article Six:

- Section 3: Including social emotional learning in the model policy.
- Section 4: Requiring school boards to adopt a written policy to address malicious and sadistic conduct involving race, gender, religion, disability, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, and sexual exploitation. These acts are very harmful to the mental health of students and adults.
- Section 7: Conducting mental health screening of student and ensuring that the records are private and not shared except with the parents.
- Section 8: Increasing funding for schools to hire more school support personnel and to measure outcomes.
- Section 9: Funding two new positions – mental health leads – within the Department of Education to serve as a source of information and support to districts to address the mental health needs of students and staff.

We appreciate the funding for the Level 4 Mental Health Innovative Grant Program which is so critical to addressing the serious mental health needs of students in Intermediate Districts.

Again, thank you for including so many provisions that will help the mental health and wellbeing of Minnesota students.

Sincerely,



Sue Abderholden, MPH
Executive Director

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Testimony for: Minnesota House Education Finance Committee

From: Amy R. Buchmeyer, HSLDA Staff Attorney

Date: April 4, 2022

Re: HF 4300DE1

Dear Chair Davnie and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

As you may know, the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is a national organization committed to protecting the fundamental constitutional right of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children. With over 106,000 member families, including over 2,000 in Minnesota, we are the world's largest homeschool advocacy organization.

On behalf of those families, HSLDA opposes the addition of “ethnic studies” as a required subject listed under Sec.120A.22, subdivision 9, MN Statutes, found on line 42.27 of HF 4300.

Minnesota's compulsory school attendance law states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that a child acquires the knowledge and skills essential for effective citizenship. If this is true normally, it is doubly so when a parent exercises their constitutional right to educate their child at home.

Homeschooling parents have a right and a duty to provide the best education for their children. Adding additional course requirements unnecessarily burdens the exercise of that right. Many parents choose homeschooling because it provides the flexibility to tailor a curriculum to meet their child's individual needs. Additional course requirements create further hurdles for parents, limiting their ability to adjust to their student's unique interests. Failure to comply with this new requirement would be a violation of the compulsory attendance law. Homeschools do not look like public or private schools—nor should they. Forced standardization and conformity stifles the very flexibility from which homeschooled children benefit.

When educating their own child, a parent agrees to meet the basic requirements listed in the compulsory school attendance statute, including four broad subject areas: basic communication skills including reading and writing, literature, and fine arts; mathematics and science; social studies including history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship; and health and physical education.

“Ethnic studies” is out of place as a fifth category on this list. It is not as broad as the other subject areas and more accurately fits under the social studies category. There are other, more appropriate places in the statute to list ethnic studies as a requirement, and they are already listed in this bill under the provisions for public school students.

The addition of another required subject to Sec. 120A.22 undermines the purpose of the statute and prevents parents who have taken responsibility for their children's education from fully exercising their authority to educate their children in effective citizenship as they see fit.

Therefore, we ask you to remove line 42.27.



April 4, 2022

TO: Members, House Education Finance Committee

FROM: Dr. Julie Bunn, Executive Director, Minnesota Council on Economic Education

RE: Comments on DE1 HF4300 (Davnie) E-12 Omnibus Bill

The **Minnesota Council on Economic Education (MCEE)** has long been an advocate for economic and financial literacy education for all Minnesotans and is committed to working with stakeholders to ensure young Minnesotans have the skills needed to succeed in the future. We are allies in the cause of promoting financial literacy, especially in communities of color and those facing systemic barriers to financial services and education.

We wish to thank Chair Davnie and members for including most of the appropriation language for MCEE contained in HF3393 (Sandell)/ SF3426 (Duckworth) in the Omnibus Bill. The DE1 includes for MCEE \$150,000 in FY2023, and \$150,000 in the base in FY2024. This funding is essential to ensure that Minnesota's teachers receive the training required to deliver the K-12 economic and personal finance standards embedded in the social studies standards, and to support training for Minnesota business and family and consumer science teachers.

We also wish to thank Chair Davnie and members for including in the Omnibus Bill a half-credit personal finance high school graduation requirement. Research clearly demonstrates that a quality introduction to personal finance in high school produces a range of very desirable behavioral changes, and that these changes and outcomes are stronger for students receiving a full-course in personal finance than those in standards-only states.

In light of inclusion of the high school personal finance course requirement, the appropriation in support of MCEE's core mission to train Minnesota teachers in economics and personal finance is all the more important. We will be ready to train the high school teacher workforce needed to support in-person instruction in personal finance.

Contact: Dr. Julie Bunn, Executive Director MCEE: jbunn@umn.edu; 624-9477.

April 4, 2022 HF4300 DE1

To: Members of the House Education Finance Committee

From: Robert S. Prigge, MÂCHÉ Executive Director

Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators - MÂCHÉ

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HF4300 DE1. I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Association of Christian Homeschool Educators in opposition to the new state curricula mandate included in HF4300 DE1, “line 42.27”. Specifically, MÂCHÉ is concerned that the additional requirement of “ethnic studies” is unclear, and intrusive.

This requirement for distinct focus on ethnic studies is not needed. Part of the expectations for social studies education already includes the study of all people groups that are representative of those that have built both Minnesota and the collective United States. This has long been part of our social studies curriculum, and segregating it apart from a comprehensive and cohesive social studies curriculum is inappropriate. It would also seem to focus this topical area on par with mathematics, science and communication competencies, which is again concerning and highly subjective.

The requirement is unclear. The legislation requires instruction to be provided in ethnic studies, but doesn’t define the term, a clearly communicated intent and the learning objective of this focus, how to measure outcomes in an effective and healthy manner for students of this instruction. The lack of clarity in the focus and objective would be very problematic as a required course of instruction and frankly is likely duplicative of the social studies focus currently in place.

The requirement is intrusive. The basic, inalienable, right of parents to raise and educate their children is conducted in cooperation with the state within the boundaries of indigenous (or natural) law. Where the state could add numerous areas of particular study, for each political wave that blows, they also need to be done within the consent of the governed. (For instance, we could easily add “computer programming” as an “essential” area of study to thrive in the modern world, express ourselves, and to be independent.) Each area of focus requires time and necessarily removes time from other areas of study. Requirements are not to be added lightly or done where they are not commonly agreed on. Where some subjects have different levels of importance to different people, they will make curricular choices for the good of the child. This autonomy is not necessarily a denigration of a topic, but a right to customize learning. We regard tolerance for difference as a primary value in education.

The purpose and point of a general outline of instructional expectations is to sustain a *common* understanding of the current law pointing to the absolute basics of communication (reading and writing), mathematics and science, and social studies for and towards the core elements needed for basic citizenship. Where these subjects have heightened value that is commonly agreed upon, picking a particular narrow topic and elevating it is driven by political preference and subjective opinion, not common law.

I encourage you to remove the addition of “ethnic studies” as a required subject from HF4300 DE1.