



**An association of resources and advocacy for children, youth and families**  
[www.aspiremn.org](http://www.aspiremn.org)

February 16, 2021

Dear Members of the House Education Finance Committee,

AspireMN is very supportive of HF1064. This legislation supports the beginning of deeply needed comprehensive responses to the many ways the COVID pandemic has impacted children, youth and families.

As providers of supports and services to children, youth and families, AspireMN members have observed the pandemic impacts of isolation, family stress, and deep disruption in the lives of children and youth. Former clients have sought support due to regression in progress that had been previously made. Referrals for mental health services reflect increased acuity – with community based mental health providers seeing greater needs for intensive services.

Positively, we know that early intervention, sustained access, and supportive environments that encourage children and youth to receive mental health treatment make a profound and lasting difference. Assuring that critical mental health services are available, culturally relevant, and respond to the unique needs of our children, youth and families is profoundly important.

The investments in school, students, and community in HF1064 will generate needed attention for students to rebound from lapses in education, build positive relationships, and engage in community life that is invested in their wellbeing. Specific school-linked mental health investments seen in HF1064 will sustain and build infrastructure that reflects the values of access and responsiveness to students and families while also building school cultures that value mental health for all.

Rebuilding resilience in our children, youth, families and wider communities is a primary task as we respond to the toll of the pandemic. Thank you for your support for this important proposal.

Kirsten Anderson  
Executive Director

**AspireMN improves the lives of children, youth and families served by member organizations through support for quality service delivery, leadership development and policy advocacy.**