

Hello,

My name is Dr. Anna Bohlinger and I am a healthcare professional working with PrairieCare Residential Services in Maple Grove, MN. I am writing in support of HF725 / SF782 to provide extended time revenue to school districts to provide education through the summer for students in residential, mental health, or juvenile justice placements.

This is an important piece of legislation for the health, wellbeing, and future of youth and families in Minnesota. Youth in the facility I work with live all around the state and an educated population is a healthier one. The youth I serve in residential treatment are working hard at improving their lives and becoming healthier young people and citizens. This bill is important to me because of so many of the youth we serve are behind in school by the time they meet us; helping kids catch up in school is so important for helping them catch emotionally and socially when they get to go home to their real lives and communities again.

Thank you for positively considering this bill. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Bohlinger, PhD LMFT  
Clinical Supervisor  
PrairieCare Residential Services

February 17, 2021

MR. Chair and members of the House Education Finance Division,

My name is JoAnn Erickson and I am the principal of the New Dominion School in Austin, MN, which serves all the youth who are at Gerard Academy for mental health residential treatment. Our K-12 school serves some of the most vulnerable youth in the State of Minnesota. All our students have a mental health diagnosis and most of them come to our campus and school after significant interventions and hospitalizations for complex trauma and significant mental health issues that require 24-hour care and supervision. Our youth come from every corner of Minnesota.

I am writing to express my strong support for HF 725, “a bill for an act relating to education finance; expanding extended time revenue to all students placed at residential treatment facilities providing mental health or juvenile justice”.

HF 725 qualifies students in specialized education settings such as care and treatment (like our school) and juvenile justice programs for the extended time learning opportunities (after school/summer school) that most at-risk students are already eligible for. Minnesota Statute 124D.68 describes the motivation for creating the Graduation Incentive Program and extended time learning opportunities as a way “encourage students who find themselves ‘at-risk’ of not graduating to enroll and earn a high school diploma”. I would argue that the youth at our school and the other specialized programs mentioned in this bill are among the most highly at-risk in our state, and most of our students would qualify for this funding if they were in their home districts. Limiting access to extended time revenue to programs like ours takes away education dollars for the most significantly at-risk youth in Minnesota.

HF725, if passed, will be a great win for not only the students at New Dominion School, but also for the countless other at-risk youth in specialized programs for whom this funding has been unavailable. Our mission at NDS is to provide quality education to youth who have often had very little success in other settings, and we see ourselves as an extension of the care and healing our youth need. I am grateful to see our legislature take up such quality legislation and I applaud your work.

Respectfully,

  
JoAnn Erickson | School Administrator  
New Dominion School



February 15, 2021

Dear Members of the Education Finance Committee:

NAMI Minnesota strongly supports HF 725 which would provide extended time revenue for students placed in a residential facility or juvenile justice facility.

When a child or teen is placed in a residential facility, they spend part of their day in treatment. This means that many are not receiving a full day of education. They are also being educated by the school where the facility is located, so may not have formed a relationship with the teachers. More than likely, their symptoms were interfering with their being successful in school before they were even admitted to the treatment facility, so they were already lagging behind their peers.

Many teens with a serious mental illness drop out of school and never graduate. Missing school, symptoms interfering with learning and feeling unsuccessful in school all contribute to poor graduation rates. Supporting these students to have access to additional classroom time during the summer will help them to catch up to their peers and to be more successful in school.

Please support HF 725. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Abderholden".

Sue Abderholden, MPH  
Executive Director



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February 12, 2021  
House Education Finance Committee

Dear Distinguished Committee Members,

My name is Richard Wolleat, and I am the CEO of Northwood Children's Services in Duluth, Minnesota. Northwood is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides a full continuum of mental health treatment services to children and families from throughout the state of Minnesota. ISD 709 provides educational programming to our clients through two schools co-located on our campuses. Northwood also operates year-round day treatment programs in four ISD 709 schools. We serve approximately 300 children and youth a day in our various programs, which include outpatient, day treatment, early childhood day treatment, diagnostic and assessment, corporate foster care and residential treatment services.

I am writing today to request your support for HF725 and SF782. Many of the students in our mental health treatment programs lag far behind their peers in academic achievement because of the disruptions, trauma and other challenges they have faced in their lives. The Covid pandemic has exacerbated those gaps. It is our experience that the kids make huge strides academically when we are able to provide them with a safe, stable and nurturing environment in our treatment programs. Data gathered and analyzed from a group of students several years ago indicated they made progress at a dramatically accelerated pace.

The financial support from this bill would provide districts the tools they need to offer flexible, extended educational programming for our students. Believe me, the impact would be huge. The most effective educational model we delivered to our kids was a number of years ago when I was able to negotiate an extended- year contract with the district and local educators union. We essentially were able to offer year-round school, and the continuity and consistency of that model were an optimal fit for our students.

I appreciate your time and consideration, and I would be happy to provide any additional information you would find useful.

Respectfully,

Richard J. Wolleat, MSSW, LICSW  
President and CEO  
Northwood Children's Services

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**BOYS GROUP HOME**  
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Brianna Sittig, MSW  
1013 Lakeland Dr NE  
Willmar, MN 56201  
February 12, 2021

The House Education Finance Committee

Re: HF725 (Youakim)/SF782 (Chamberlain)

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support of passing legislation which would provide Extended Time Revenue to school districts to provide education through the summer for all students in residential, mental health, and juvenile justice placements. As the Program Director of the PLYP Boys Group Home, I have seen first hand the benefits of summer school for youth in placement. Often youth come into care behind on credits and/or skill level of other same-age peers. By allowing the proposed amendments to Minnesota Statutes 202 section 126C.10, subdivision 2a, more youth in care would have the opportunity to recover missing credits, strengthen necessary skill sets, and in some cases get ahead in their schooling. These obvious benefits will only continue to aid in their successes as they reunify with their home communities.

Last year, a youth came into my program as a 17-year-old with fewer high school credits than what would be considered 9<sup>th</sup> grade. He shared that he had always hoped of graduating high school and attending college; unfortunately, due to his family circumstances, school was not a priority for him while living at home. This young man was so motivated that, during his 6 months in care, he was able to earn enough school credits to graduate high school early. He elected to take his GED test instead, which he passed with college-ready scores. During his last update, he had shared that he was taking his ACT and was hoping to enroll in post-secondary school options for the January 2021 semester. This would not have been a reality for this young man had he not had the opportunity to be enrolled in summer school while in care at PLYP.

In honor of this young man, and so many more like him, I would ask that you vote to pass Bill HF725 (Youakim)/SF782 (Chamberlain) and the proposed amendments to Minnesota Statutes 202, section 126C.10, subdivision 2a.

Sincerely,

Brianna Sittig



MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN

Helping America's most vulnerable®

**Metro Boulevard Office**

February 16, 2021

To: House Education Finance Committee

At Volunteers of America of Minnesota we are deeply committed to serving children, youth, and families with services that meet their unique needs. We operate three children's residential treatment facilities in the state of Minnesota for children and adolescents who have histories of trauma and struggle with serious mental illness. Over the years, we have helped thousands of children return to stability after trauma crisis.

Today, we are writing in support of **HF725** which would provide extended time revenue to school districts that educate students at residential treatment facilities providing mental health or juvenile justice services. This bill would ensure that school districts can provide extended time academic support to our residents to help them return to stability and a successful life in community.

One in five young people experience a mental health problem during their school years. For millions of children, treatment can transform lives—but not nearly enough have access to care. At Volunteers of America of Minnesota, we are working to close this gap. It is widely acknowledged that youth with mental illnesses and their families need access to the right level of mental health treatment at the right time including, when appropriate, residential treatment services. At the core of our "never give up" approach is a belief that all youth have the ability to reach their full potential. Your support of HF725 bill is greatly needed and appreciated, and its passage will promote efforts to ensure all children and adolescents have educational stability and support that meet their needs.

Once again, thank you for your leadership and service on behalf of children, youth, and families. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [Julie.Manworren@voamn.org](mailto:Julie.Manworren@voamn.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Manworren".

Julie Manworren  
President and CEO