

To Members of the HOUSE EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE

From: Joe Nathan, PhD, founder and former director, Center for School Change, 36 year Minnesota public K-16 educator

Re: HF 3585

March 25, 2026

Dear Members:

The following is based on 50 years of work with public schools in Minnesota and around the country, including successful experience helping the Cincinnati Public Schools ELIMINATE the graduation gap between African American and white students. This happened at a time when Ohio had instituted statewide exams in several areas, making it more difficult to graduate.

If you want to understand why thousands of young Minnesotans are not attending school regularly, I urge you to include on the Task Force studying this issue

\* Two (student) members of the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs MAAP Stars Program

\* One person from the Catalyst for Systems Change Changemakers program.

\* One person who has participated successfully in the career technical portion of PSEO – possibly suggested by People for PSEO.

There are many reasons students are not attending school. Some have to do with family challenge. Some have to do with a traditional setting that does not respect them – their culture, their needs, their strengths.

I have great respect for the Minnesota Youth Council. But those are young people who are doing very, very well in school.

Moreover, as I tried to explain yesterday, there are some young people who are deeply bored in high school, for whom PSEO has been a life changing experience, allowing them to blossom.

Thank you for considering these suggestions.