March 22, 2023

Re: Course Requirements

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA), Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), and Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) we would like to share some important concerns about required courses for students in elementary and secondary school. We have testified in the past with concerns about any new or additional required courses or education programs and wanted to again place our concerns on the record.

Local Control

We appreciate the commitment to strengthening the areas presented, however, our members have concerns about adding any new requirements to the existing standards. Statewide standards are already determined and taught in kindergarten through 12th grade. Curriculum and program decisions are best made at the local level by school boards working with their staff, students, and community. Communities want input and choice in district's academic curriculum and programming.

High School Coursework

We have concerns about the impact new requirements would have on the state's high school students. Minnesota high school students have 36 months to complete the required 22.5 credits to graduate. Adding credits or coursework requirements won't allow a lot of room for the classes students have worked so hard to master and want to continue throughout high school. While the topics in the proposed bills are all important, looking at it from a 30,000 foot view, it puts students and families, especially within their senior year, in a position where choice is impacted. How would this program interact with a student's electives, like CTE courses, or higher level language, math, or science courses?

Costs

We would be happy to work together to strengthen these content areas through the implementation of the new social studies standards. Please note that implementing new curriculum or educational programs is very costly. We are also concerned with the costs of staff for training, implementation, and reporting.