

March 2, 2021

Rep. Jim Davnie
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Ron Kresha
207 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Roger Chamberlain
3225 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Sen. Chuck Wiger
2219 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Education Chairs and Minority Leads:

We are writing to urge you to pass legislation addressing key COVID-19 recovery issues prior to the legislature's spring recess which begins on March 26. As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions for students, parents, teachers, school district administrators and board members.

School officials are working to develop summer learning opportunities to address the disrupted and lost learning opportunities many students have experienced. In addition, school districts are dealing with the significant impact of the pandemic related enrollment decline as they work to develop budgets for the summer and the 2021-22 school year. While many students and parents are thrilled to be returning to in person learning, some have expressed safety concerns and are requesting distance learning as a delivery model option for next year.

To help school boards, administrators, teachers and families meet the challenges of the pandemic and properly plan for the summer and the 2021-22 school year, we respectfully ask that you pass legislation addressing at least the following issues prior to leaving for the spring recess on March 26:

- Mitigate the impact of the enrollment decline related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Provide funding for summer programming opportunities to address unfinished learning as well as student support services to meet the mental health needs of students.
- Increase flexibility in extended time programs to serve more students and expand opportunities.
- Extend authority for school districts to offer distance learning through the 2021-22 school year to students and families who desire that option.
- Streamline the process to obtain a short-call substitute teaching license to align with the Tier 1 licensing requirement to teach a class in a career and technical education or career pathways course of study.

Thank you for your consideration and we stand ready to assist you in any way we can over the next three weeks to pass legislation that meets the needs of our students and our communities.

Sincerely,

Association of Metropolitan School Districts



MN Administrators for Special Education



MN Association of School Administrators



MN Association of School Business Officials



MN Association of Secondary School Principals



MN Community Education Association



Minnesota Community Education Association

MN Elementary School Principals Association



MN Rural Education Association



MN School Boards Association



MN Service Cooperatives



Schools for Equity in Education



CC: Governor Tim Walz
Speaker Melissa Hortman
Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
Minority Leader Susan Kent
Minority Leader Kurt Daudt
Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker



March 16, 2021

To: Members of the House Education Finance Committee

RE: House File 1064, DE 4

Dear Chair Davnie and Committee Members,

Thank you so much for your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's students! We write to share our support for provisions in HF 1064, DE 4.

The Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, and, along with every other state and territory, is the largest network of legally based advocacy services for people with disabilities in the U.S. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities. LSAP is the advocacy arm of Legal Aid and has provided legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid's clients and all low-income Minnesotans since 1977.

We support many of the provisions in HF 1064, DE 4, particularly those aimed at meeting the needs of students who have disabilities. The provisions in Section 2 of HF 1064 DE 4 would be helpful for our clients. First, home visits are something many families have been asking for. We understand this is a complicated thing to do, appreciate the work of MDE and MDH, and think this would be a helpful step. Second, one really unfortunate consequence of the pandemic is that, when a family can't make it work for a student to log on – either because the parents are working or a student is struggling – that can impact attendance and under our current laws, trigger truancy. Subdivision 2 of Section 2 would give districts flexibility to take a student's disability into consideration before making truancy referrals. Finally, the crunch of the pandemic is felt really significantly for Minnesota's oldest students, who are missing their last chances to benefit from public education. Subdivision 3 of Section 2 would waive the age cut-off so students who haven't been able to receive their last year of special education services can do so. We are grateful to Representative Hassan for championing these issues in House File 4 and to Chair Davnie for including them in this bill.

We are also supportive of efforts to provide resources to provide all students, and particularly low-income students, English language learners, students in need of mental health supports, and students who have disabilities, with the support they need to address learning missed during Covid-19 disruptions. We are grateful for the efforts towards that in this bill.

Thank you so much for your leadership and consideration of these significant proposals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maren Hulden", is positioned above the typed name.

Maren Hulden
Staff Attorney