



March 16, 2023

Re: Support for HF1589, Special education teacher pipeline program

Dear Chair Youakim and Members of the House Education Finance Committee,

Minnesota is experiencing a very real shortage of special education teachers, in all corners of the state. This shortage is leaving too many students without the services they deserve, while also putting a strain on schools and staff as they work to fill essential gaps. Access to effective educators for students with disabilities is not just a legal imperative, but a moral one—and as such, addressing this shortage should be a top policy priority.

HF1589 would establish a program targeted toward addressing this need, filling shortages by providing funding to districts to partner with board approved teacher preparation programs to increase the supply of trained special education teachers. Paraprofessionals, support staff, and Tier 1 and 2 teachers who seek additional training to enter and thrive in the field of special education should not be turned away by undue barriers, and this program will provide critical resources and supports to help candidates cover tuition, access effective mentorship, and more.

This bill creates an important program and a critical moment for students who need support now. We thank Rep. Bennett for her leadership, and urge the committee to support HF1589.

Sincerely,
Matt Shaver
Policy Director