



Barnum  
Carlton  
Cloquet  
Cromwell-Wright  
Esko  
Hermantown

Lake Superior  
McGregor  
Moose Lake  
Proctor  
Willow River  
Wrenshall

*Dena Hagen, Director of Special Education*

Cook County  
International Falls  
Nett Lake  
Mt. Iron/Buhl  
St. Louis County

Ely  
Chisholm  
Mesabi East  
Rock Ridge



***Northland***  
**LEARNING CENTER**

*Brian Yuretich, Executive Director*

# Why is HF 3239 important?

- We serve students with a wide range of severe special needs-Autism, Emotional Behavior Disorders, Cognitive Disabilities, etc.
- School districts are obligated to provide a continuum of services.
- Before our programs were in place, a NLA or NLC student's only option for learning was at home, due to safety, often just for one hour a day!
- Provides true, continued cooperation among area schools
- Long-term commitment of quality services for students with special needs
- Limited or no availability of existing building space to move to
- More efficient use of space and resources
- Keeps the services centrally located to member districts
- Adds value to the cooperative through ownership
- The communities need and supports our projects.

# Why should the state partner with us?

- Students at our schools have severe disabilities and mental health needs and can't attend regular schools.
- Mental health and behavioral support is a top priority in our state. It touches all of us in some way.
- Our schools need the state's help to educate *ALL* Minnesota students, including those with high needs, and they can't fund it alone.
- Rural MN districts can't meet the needs like metro districts can. We have a much smaller tax base in our communities.
- We've been trying for years to find a solution for our facility needs and can't get it done.
- State help would provide tax savings to constituents across Northeastern MN.
- Member districts can continue to contribute what they currently pay

# Why can't our districts fund this?

- It's challenging for all of our school districts to agree to fund these projects together.
- We've been trying for years to find a solution for our facility needs and can't get it done.
- Right now, our member districts only have their regular lease levy authority OR their general fund as options to pay for this.
- Several of our districts are maxed out on their current levy authority with other individual district priorities.

# How have similar projects been funded?

- Central MN districts with projects like ours have received \$5M grants from large companies like Sourcewell.
  - We don't have access to any grants like these.
- Metro area districts have an additional \$65/per pupil for lease levy authority, to use *only* for cooperative projects like ours.
  - Current MN Statute does not allow cooperatives to access the same extra levy authority.



# ***Northland***

## ***LEARNING CENTER***

- I've been a part of the Northland Learning Center for 20 years
- In that time, I've seen and worked with thousands of students of all ages with high behavior and mental health needs.
- I've seen the impact we have on students as I will see them years later and see the light in their eye and hear how they have become a productive member of our community!
- Research shows that environment influences behavior and mood. With the right fitting and designed environment we can have even more of a positive impact on our students.

# More of the Northern Lights Academy Story...



- Our programs have changed student and family lives for the past 5 yrs! Example
- Our NLA students have no playground or green space for their school day.
- We can't serve all students in need, we are out of space.
- We're educating our member district students with the highest needs in 3 secondhand, surplus spaces-a school basement, a church wing, and in part of a high school.
- NLA students know they don't have "*the same stuff*" as other schools.
- Anyone of us could have a family member who needs a special school like ours. *All* students deserve to learn in quality educational spaces.
- \$6M would help us build a school for our students and staff with the classrooms and space we need to be able to continue the life-changing work the NLA does.

**Please!** Help us fund our school projects.

We can't think of a more important way to spend money than to invest in students as our future.

**You're welcome to come and tour our current sites-anytime!**

Thank you so much for your consideration