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DATE February 9, 2023  
TO House Human Services Finance Committee  
FROM Adrián Rafael Magaña | Director of Public Policy & Community Relations | The Wilder Foundation

**Written Testimony: HF 564 | School Linked Mental Health Grants**

Chair Noor & Members of the Human Services Finance Committee:

Wilder has served children and families with mental health care for nearly 100 years, constantly evolving our services to meet their new and changing needs. Back in 2016, we worked with the Intermediate School District 287 (ISD 287) to create a brand-new model of integrated, high-intensity, interdisciplinary mental health services for children called the **Therapeutic Teaching Model**. These services were made possible due to the legislatures' support of School-Linked Mental Health Grants. **We are writing today to urge you to continue this vital support, and vote in favor of HF 564.**

Wilder's Children's Therapeutic Supports & Services (STSS) providers have been able to serve countless families and students in a holistic and effective way. We have seen kids arrive in absolute survival mode, destroying classrooms and stealing staff keys, and family members struggling in their own ways, often with mental health issues as well. These are families and kids that are barely surviving, often without tangible hope. However, through passion, dedication, and a model that is the product of yearlong in-depth consultation, and over three years of piloting, evaluating, and refinement, our talented mental health professionals and educators have been able to re-instill hope to families and offer a path for lasting and holistic change.

The Therapeutic Teaching Model, and other innovative and successful models of school-linked services depend on the legislatures support of HF 564 this session. School-linked mental health services have proven to be one of the most effective programs at reducing barriers to children and youth accessing mental health treatment. By locating mental health professionals in the schools where the students already are, access to critically needed mental health services are greatly increased as barriers such as transportation, difficulty navigating the system, and taking time-off of work are eliminated, resulting in better outcomes for our communities.

**The need is great and the efficacy of these grants are demonstrable, we urge you to support HF 564 and ensure that students continue to have pathways to success.**

Thank you,

Adrián Rafael Magaña

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