

April 13, 2026

Rep. Ron Kresha, Co-Chair  
House Education Finance Committee  
Centennial Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Rep. Cheryl Youakim, Co-Chair  
House Education Finance Committee  
Centennial Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Kresha and Youakim:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are submitting this letter to the House Education Finance Committee to provide strong support for the safe schools funding for **all schools** included in the DE1 amendment to HF3493, (Lawrence), and to again highlight the urgent need in Minnesota to make sure all our schools are secure and safe, particularly given recent horrific attacks on our schools in Minnesota and across the country. We believe that the state must play a leading role in ensuring all students – regardless of whether they attend public, charter, or nonpublic schools – are safe and secure in our schools.

For background, there are approximately 72,000 students enrolled in Independent, Catholic, Jewish, Christian, Lutheran, and Islamic nonpublic schools in our state. In Minnesota, as you know, too many of our schools have experienced security issues. We believe that by creating a system where some schools are safe while others are not as secure creates targets for nefarious actors to cause significant harm to students and staff.

Back in 2023, nonpublic schools directly advocated with Gov. Walz to include nonpublic schools in a program proposed by his administration called the Building and Cyber Security Grant Program. Unfortunately, in the end, nonpublic schools were not included in this program. And since 2020, nonpublic schools have been advocating to be part of the Safe Schools Program that provides funding to school districts for emergency response training, security upgrades, mental health services and security resources.

We urge the committee to consider moving this legislation and funding forward that includes **safe school funding for all schools and students in all sectors – public, nonpublic, charter, independent, cooperative, and tribal schools**. Legislation aimed to protect and allocate funding to some schools but not all only makes the schools who are unfunded as vulnerable against future tragedies. This is unacceptable.

We cannot change the terrible tragedies that have fallen on our schools in the past 20 years, but we can change the future and prevent these tragedies from happening in the first place. We strongly urge you to take action and provide this critical funding for **all schools**, including nonpublic schools, this legislative session.

Respectfully,

Tim Benz  
President  
MINNDEPENDENT

Jason Adkins  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Catholic Conference

Ethan Roberts  
Executive Director  
Jewish Community  
Relations Council

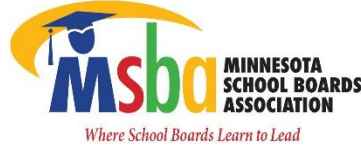
Zaheer Baber  
President  
Islamic Center of Minnesota

Dan Beckering  
Head of School, SW Christian HS  
Minnesota Representative, ACSI

James C. Davis, Jr.  
Education Superintendent  
Minnesota Conference of  
Seventh-day Adventists

Sean Martens  
Minnesota Districts Education Executive  
LCMS Lutheran Schools

C: Members of the House Education Finance and Policy Committee



April 14, 2026

Dear Members of the House Education Finance Committee:

Thank you for your continued attention to school safety and security. On behalf of organizations representing Minnesota's public schools, we write to share both support and concerns for HF3493.

We have advocated for increasing safe schools funding for public schools for years. The safe schools levy has not increased in more than a decade, and inflation has significantly eroded its purchasing power while the demands on schools have grown considerably. School districts across Minnesota face real and rising costs across the full continuum of school safety needs, from physical security upgrades and surveillance technology to cybersecurity infrastructure and student mental health supports. A reliable and sufficient ongoing funding stream is essential for districts to invest across this full continuum and plan responsibly for the future.

At the same time, our members have significant concerns with extending ongoing, per pupil funding beyond public school systems. Public schools are accountable to voters and state policymakers, required to serve all students, and operate under comprehensive academic, financial, and transparency standards. We do not support expanding ongoing public funding to nonpublic institutions without those same obligations and accountability measures.

On a separate provision in the bill, we support allowing dismissals for students in kindergarten through grade 3 for up to three school days under strict conditions to ensure student and staff safety. This provision would provide our educators with the time needed to put appropriate supports in place so students can return to a stable and supportive learning environment.

Lastly, we wish to remind the committee of other pressing funding priorities facing our public schools this session. School districts are also deeply concerned about the future cut to the special education that is scheduled to take effect in coming years. Providing every student with a free and appropriate public education is not optional and cutting this funding forces impacts all students.

Extending the compensatory revenue hold harmless for one more year is also critical. This will allow the Compensatory Revenue Task Force to finalize its recommendations for consideration in the 2027 session. Absent extending the hold harmless funding, most school districts will experience a reduction in compensatory revenue due to the change in how students in need of support are identified under the Universal Meals legislation. Relying only on direct certification fails to identify many students in need of support. School districts continue to strive to serve those students but are forced to do so with fewer resources.

Minnesota's public schools educate more than 90 percent of our students and serve as the cornerstone of communities across the state. Funding decisions about how education resources are directed should reflect that reality.

Respectfully,

Association of Metropolitan School Districts  
Minnesota Association of School Administrators  
Minnesota Association of School Business Officials  
Minnesota Rural Education Association  
Minnesota School Boards Association

**Date:** April 14, 2025

**To:** Members of the Education Finance Committee

**Re: Written Testimony in Strong Support of HF 3493**

Dear Co-Chairs Kresha and Youakim, Co-Vice Chairs Bakeberg and Clardy, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude to the committee for bringing HF 3493 back to the table for discussion today. I strongly urge you to pass this vital legislation. This is not just another administrative bill; it is common-sense legislation that can actually do something concrete to make our schools safer.

By increasing safe schools revenue and expanding its availability to include charter schools, cooperative units, nonpublic schools, and Tribal contract schools, this bill ensures that every learning environment has the baseline resources needed to protect its students. The legislation can provide all schools the essential \$36 per adjusted pupil unit or enrolled student.

Politicians across the aisle, Democrats and Republicans alike, continually remind the public of the critical importance of safety for our children. We frequently hear the promise that "there is no cost too great" when it comes to keeping our kids safe. HF 3493 gives you the opportunity to put those words into action.

Given that shared bipartisan rhetoric, there should be absolutely no issue passing this legislation, especially considering the minuscule dollar amount of \$36 per student it requires. If no cost is too great, then this modest investment in crime prevention, mental health, and facility security should be the easiest "yes" vote of the session.

Please honor your commitments to our children's safety and pass HF 3493.

Sincerely,

Michael Babcock  
Saint Paul, MN 55106

# Protect ALL Children: A THREE-TIERED APPROACH

## 1 Give more kids a chance! Ban high-capacity ammunition magazines!

### WHAT ARE HIGH-CAPACITY MAGAZINES?

- Feeding devices that hold **more than 10 rounds** of ammunition
- Allow a shooter to continuously fire bullets **without reloading**

### HOW POWERFUL ARE THEY?

- Some magazines hold **up to 100 rounds**
- Standard high-capacity magazines hold **30 rounds**
- The larger the magazine, the longer a person can shoot without interruption. In mass shootings, this reduces opportunities to escape, linking the device to **higher casualty counts**.



### ALARMING STATISTICS

In mass shooting where 4+ people were killed (2015-2022), incidents with high-capacity magazines led to:

- More than twice as many people killed
- Nearly 10x more people wounded per incident (on average)<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly 5x more people shot per incident (on average)<sup>2</sup>

### LEGAL STATUS?

- From 1994-2004, magazines **holding more than 10 rounds** were prohibited under the Federal Assault Weapons Ban
- Today, **14 states** have bans in place<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.everytown.org/solutions/prohibit-high-capacity-magazines/#myth-fact>

<sup>2</sup> [https://everytownresearch.org/stat/mass-shooting-high-capacity-magazine-people-shot/?\\_gl=1\\*vu6hrk\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MjU0NjM5NDk3LjE3NjY1NDI4NzY](https://everytownresearch.org/stat/mass-shooting-high-capacity-magazine-people-shot/?_gl=1*vu6hrk*_gcl_au*MjU0NjM5NDk3LjE3NjY1NDI4NzY)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.everytown.org/solutions/prohibit-high-capacity-magazines/#why-does-it-need-to-be-solved>

## 2 HELP KEEP STUDENTS SAFE AT SCHOOL: EXPAND SAFE SCHOOLS FUNDING

School safety is a concern for every school—public, nonpublic, charter, and tribal. When one school is vulnerable, all schools are vulnerable. Parents, students, educators, and volunteers deserve a clear commitment from the State of Minnesota to invest in protecting every child and adult in our schools.

### OUR RECOMMENDATION:

- **Extend Safe Schools Program** eligibility to nonpublic, charter, and tribal schools
- Provide **at least \$100 per enrolled student** in state aid
- **Increase state aid and school board-approved levy authority** to ensure school districts have long-term, sustainable resources to meet ongoing safety needs

A broad coalition of Minnesota organizations representing more than 72,000 students agrees: **Increase safe schools funding!**

### OTHER STATES ARE ACTING:

- Religious and independent schools in **New York are guaranteed \$165/pupil** for health, safety, and security expenses
- In New Jersey, nonpublic school security is funded at **\$205/pupil**



### Take Action!

Scan the QR Code or visit  
[mncatholic.org/protectourkids](https://mncatholic.org/protectourkids)

# 3 Stop the Harms of Addictive Social Media (SHASM)

An Effort to Empower Parents and Protect Youth's Experience Online




## THE PROBLEM

Social media platforms (SMPs) are addictive by design, and this has created mental health challenges for today's youth. In reality, parents cannot combat the impact of social media alone. They are looking for help. The current "safeguards" tech corporations have implemented for youth users have proven ineffective. We can do more!

## CURRENT "SOLUTIONS" ARE NOT CUTTING IT

By the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), 13 years old is the required age to open a social media account, but **nearly 40 percent of children between the ages of eight and 12 have accounts.**

 A recent study found that at least 30 of the 47 safety features promoted by *Instagram for Kids* are either ineffective or no longer available.

 20 of the safety features on *Instagram for Kids* could be circumvented or evaded in three minutes or less.

## HOW SHASM WORKS:

Child wants to make a profile on a popular social media platform. → Child sees she is required to obtain parental consent since she is under 16 years old. → Child starts process of obtaining necessary permissions.

### SCENARIO #1:

Parent does not agree to provide consent.



Child is unable to create an account.

*If the child decides to lie about her age to get around the initial creation, the platform, by observing her activity, which it already does to target content towards her, will likely recognize she is under 16 and force her to receive verifiable parental consent before returning to the platform.*

### SCENARIO #2:

Parent agrees to provide consent.



Parent provides the platform with required permission, allowing the child to create an account with increased protections.

### Protections for users 15 and under:

- All privacy settings set by default
- Parents can monitor the amount of time their child spends on platform
- Parents can set time limits for social media use
- SMP cannot present addictive features in feed (ex. auto-play of videos)
- Prohibition of targeted advertising towards youth

## VERIFIABLE PARENTAL CONSENT:

The FTC provides guidance for forms of Verifiable Parental Consent, such as a parent providing a signed consent form sent via fax, mail, or e-scan or verifying the parents photo ID, followed against a second photo of parent submission using facial recognition technology.

Jason Adkins  
Executive Director  
jadkins@mncatholic.org



Maggee Hangge  
Assistant Director for Family Policy  
mhangge@mncatholic.org



## MINNDEPENDENT

### Written testimony from Tim Benz, President, MINNDEPENDENT

Chair Kresha and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Tim Benz; I serve as President of MINNDEPENDENT. We are the largest organization supporting and advocating for Minnesota's nonpublic schools – we represent 188 nonpublic schools that educate more than 42,000 students across all parts of Minnesota. I am writing to support HF3493 (DE1 amendment) which makes great strides to ensure each Minnesota student has access to a safe and secure educational experience.

Beginning in 2020, MINNDEPENDENT and our fellow nonpublic school partners have advocated for extending school safety funding to cover students in all sectors. When one type of student is excluded, that creates an opportunity for harm.

HF3493-DE1 closes that gap and ensures stable, reliable, and flexible resources to help schools prepare, respond and administer holistic and comprehensive plans for safe school communities.

This legislation allows for a wide range of uses - including security improvements, staff training, mental health resources, and counseling.

Minnesota has a proud 50-year history of treating each student equitably for critical essential services – including busing, counseling, nursing and learning materials.

Key words in statutes include, “it is in **the public interest**...so that the health, welfare and safety of the children, while using the public highways of the state, shall be protected.”

It also references, “**every school pupil in the state** will share equitably in education benefits...”

These statutes affirm certain programs are for the “common good” of ALL students in Minnesota. Safe and secure schools are the most “common good.”


What happened on August 27 at Annunciation Catholic School must never happen again.

The time is now to enact legislation that provides stable, reliable and flexible resources and help ensure a safe and secure learning environment for each student.

The students supported by these critical services live in your neighborhoods and are members of your community.

I urge you to support this legislation for the safety and security of Minnesota’s students.

Respectfully,

  
Tim Benz  
President



April 12, 2026

House Education Finance Committee

**SUBJECT: LETTER OF CONCERN ON DE AMENDMENT TO HF3493**

Dear Chairs Kresha and Youakim and Committee Members,

The Multicultural Autism Action Network is a non-profit organization serving families of children with disabilities in multicultural communities. We are writing to express our concern about the DE Amendment to HF3493.

We note with concern that the language on school safety plans does not include the language in the senate bill which requires that school safety plans specifically address the needs of students with disabilities. We would encourage you to adopt the Senate's language.

We are also concerned about line 6.4 which eliminates the prohibition on suspensions in grades K-3. We would ask the committee to consider, what is the purpose of a suspension? What educational benefit is served by suspending a student in grades K-3?

A large body of research has documented the negative effects of suspensions including poorer grades, negative impacts on school climate, increased drop-out rates. <sup>1</sup> Additionally, the disproportionate use of suspensions on children with disabilities and children of color is well documented. The 2022 report by the Department of Human Rights found that:

- American-Indian students were ten times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white peers.
- African-American students were eight times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white peers.
- Students of color were twice more likely to be suspended or expelled than white peers.
- Students with disabilities were twice as likely to be suspended or expelled as their peers without a disability.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth M. Chu and Douglas D. Ready. [Exclusion and Urban Public High Schools: Short- and Long-Term Consequences of School Suspensions](#). American Journal of Education 2018 124:4, 479-509

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Department of Human Rights Report - June 2022  
[https://mn.gov/mdhr/assets/Suspensions%20and%20Expulsions%20Report\\_tcm1061-529594.pdf](https://mn.gov/mdhr/assets/Suspensions%20and%20Expulsions%20Report_tcm1061-529594.pdf)

Hopefully we can all agree that practices which have no benefit, cause substantial harm, and have a track record of disproportionate use on marginalized students are not the way to go.

Instead, schools should focus on practices that encourage student growth and learning. We should be asking what factors contributed to the incident? What role, if any, did staff play in escalating or de-escalating the situation? What are the missing skills that the student needs to learn to deal with the situation more appropriately? And what is the plan to teach the student the skills that they were missing?

It makes no sense to us to reinstate a practice that is disproportionate in its use, has so many well-documented harmful effects, and no beneficial ones. We strongly encourage you to delete this language and focus on practices which prioritize teaching students the skills they need to successfully navigate difficult situations instead.

Sincerely,

Multicultural Autism Action Network

Delia Samuel

Fatima Molas

Rufo Jiru

Maren Christenson Hofer



Representative Ron Kresha, Chair  
Education Finance Committee  
April 14, 2026

Chair Kresha and Education Finance Committee Members,

On behalf of the professional organizations representing Minnesota's student support personnel, we are writing to share our significant concerns regarding the delete-all amendment to HF 3493. This language fundamentally alters the original scope and intent of the school support personnel funding established in 2023.

Our membership organizations include the Minnesota School Social Work Association (MSSWA), the Minnesota School Psychologists Association (MSPA), the School Nurse Organization of Minnesota (SNOM), and the Minnesota School Counselor Association (MSCA). Collectively, our members work as an integrated team to meet the physical, social, and emotional needs of students across the state.

In 2023, the Legislature made a historic investment to expand the positions of school social workers, nurses, psychologists, counselors, and chemical health counselors. The goal was clear: to increase staffing capacity to address the increasingly complex mental health and social-emotional needs that manifest in our schools every day.

We caution against the language in the HF 3493 delete-all that allows districts to redirect this aid toward general school safety resources. While there is broad agreement on the importance of maintaining safe school buildings, this funding was specifically promised to put more licensed professionals in direct contact with students. Diverting these resources now effectively strips away the specialized mental health and social emotional support our students were promised during a time of documented crisis.

While social-emotional well-being is a component of school safety, the roles these professionals play are fundamentally different from physical security measures. Research consistently shows that increasing mental health resources and supportive interventions is one of the most effective ways to reduce disciplinary issues and improve school climate from the inside out.

We recognize the desire to provide financial flexibility to school districts in a time of stretched resources. However, it is for this reason that we urge you to keep school support personnel funding and school safety aid distinct. Maintaining separate funding streams ensures that schools have dedicated resources for specialized student services while still allowing districts to make informed, independent decisions about physical safety measures.

We appreciate your continued support of Minnesota's students and welcome the opportunity to collaborate on the most effective ways to fund their long-term success.

Sincerely,

Jessie Kember, President, Damion Smith, Past President, & Sarah Wollersheim Shervey,  
Legislative Chair

MN School Psychology Association

Abbey Pierce, MSW, LICSW, President & Christy McCoy, MSW, LICSW, Legislative Chair,

MN School Social Workers Association

Sydney Piras, Board Chair; Hayley Endersbe, Board Chair-Elect; Carolyn Berger & Debbie  
Nelson, Advocacy Co-Chairs

MN School Counselor Association

Tara Cliff, School Nurse Organization of Minnesota

Good Morning Chair Youakim, Chair Kresha and Committee Members. My name is Tammy Rackliffe, Head of Schools at Duluth Edison Charter Schools. I have had the privilege of serving staff, students and families within our schools for 26 years!

Duluth Edison Charter Schools is dedicated to the achievement of academic and personal excellence serving students in PreK through 8th grade. With 2 campuses, Raleigh Academy is a small community school in the heart of the West Duluth and North Star Academy centrally located on 270 acres of school forest. We have the most diverse population within the Duluth area with 32% students of color, 28% of students receive Special Education services and 51% of students are in poverty.

**Currently** Chartered public schools receive \$0 per pupil in safe schools funding. Traditional public school districts generate a significant portion of their "Safe Schools Revenue" through Safe Schools Funding and a local property tax levy. The primary obstacle for charter schools is we lack the legal authority to levy taxes, as well as do not receive safe schools funding. This means to provide support to all students, staff and family comes from the general fund or grants.

This past year we received a grant from St Louis County to hire a Family and Community Engagement Coordinator, Cory Netland. This position has been instrumental in bridging the gap between the school and home. Cory provides necessary support through a food pantry, connecting to outside resources and bringing families into the school community.

As a leader I need to ask myself . . . What should I do? Should I reduce staff impacting the culture and climate of our school or do I eliminate Cory's position? Both support students like April and Ka'Milla, students who testified in February.

If I choose to reduce staff who support culture and climate this means students who need support with their behaviors, mental health or decision making will not receive support.

If I choose to eliminate the Family and Community Engagement coordinator. We lose a strong home to school connection which is a primary predictor of student success, often outweighing factors like socioeconomic status or school type. When families and educators act as a "united front," students experience a consistent environment that reinforces learning and behavior across both settings.

I empathize and understand the tough decision each of you need to make during this time of uncertainty. I urge each of you to put the future of our children in the hands of the state of Minnesota to ensure all public school students are fairly funded!

Protect our students - please do bring safe schools funding for public school students at my charter school. They are the reason I am in education!