

To: Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

My name is Jalue Dorjee, and I am writing to support the change to the current law requested by students in HF 2023.

I am the first Tibetan Buddhist lama born in the United States as well as the only one born and raised in Minnesota. I graduate this year from Saint Anthony Village High school whilst also balancing a highly advanced Buddhist education at home.

As someone who's gone through the whole school system as well attended a very diverse school for most of my academic career, I often heard conversations about overdoses among peers. It is clear that for many, this was a harsh reality. Some spoke about family members struggling with addiction, while others shared stories of friends who had overdosed; these discussions weren't just statistics in a textbook—they were real, emotional, and often heartbreaking experiences that shaped how I understood the impact of substance abuse.

Narcan is very important, it helps restore breathing in just minutes for people who overdosed on opioids. It seems very important to be able to teach this life saving technique in the schools in not just health, but as apart of the school curriculum.

As a Buddhist Lama, it my responsibility to preach peace, health, harmony, and happiness to Tibetans as well as every sentient being in the world. On the other hand, as a student and a regular teenager, I wish for the issue of overdosing on opioids to be solved swiftly and as soon as possible.

This is an important and urgent issue which needs to be addressed. I urge you to support HF 2023.

Sincerely,

Jalue Dorjee

Members of the House Education Policy Committee,

My name is Margaret “Maggie” Gregg and I fully support the meaningful addition of eight powerful words of clarification that the students are asking to be made to HF 2023.

I am currently a member of the Humphrey Policy Fellows cohort at the University of Minnesota.

The proposed additional verbiage is significant, and its impacts can and will be seen for generations to come.

Addressing the key issues of overdose recognition, response, and prevention will allow for a more holistic approach to substance abuse education, ensuring this extends beyond what’s just available in current health curriculum.

This was recommended by students, lending to the powerful need for this addition at the ground level. The students see and acknowledge this need better than any of us, and how it fits into their world, and the lasting impacts it will have.

I urge your support of this amendment.

Thank you for your ongoing work for our children, youth, and the future.

Maggie Gregg

To: Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

My name is Robert Wedl, and I am in support of the short but meaningful amendment that students are asking be made via HF 2023.

I served as Minnesota's Commissioner of Education (then Children, Families and Learning) from 1996-1999 in the administration of Governor Arne Carlson. I also served as Deputy Commissioner of Education in the administration of Governor Rudy Perpich.

The short amendment to HF 2023 and the state Health Standards are especially significant for several reasons including:

1. The needs of today's youth and young adults is in a crises mode. I appreciate that you recognize this. While HF 2023 is clearly needed, the amendment being proposed by our students and young adults is so crucial.
2. Overdose recognition, response and prevention is key. Prevention especially is always the best remedy. I recognize prevention is a family and community responsibility, but school is a safe place to learn.
3. By placing this into the health standard, it better assures that the focus will not only be in health class but rather will be integrated throughout the school's curriculum.
4. Having this amendment recommended by students is significant. They see their world better than any of us and how their lives interact with that environment.

I urge your support of this amendment.

Thank you members for your ongoing work on behalf of our children and youth; on behalf of our future.

To members of the Minnesota House K-12 Education Policy Committee,  
My name is Dr. Robert Shumer and I am writing in support of the student recommendation that you include language affecting youth dealing with “overdose recognition, prevention, and response education.” As someone who has been involved in the service-learning and youth civic education movement in Minnesota and the US for more than 40 years, it is critical to include the voices of community members in all remedies dealing with social problems. In this case, youth are the key members of this community, and their voices should be heard and acknowledged.

From a service-learning perspective, it is important to include youth programs that help young people to learn about the causes and treatments for overdose and addiction, and more importantly, involve them in the implementation of programs that engage in the education and response efforts so that they can have an important impact on addressing this critical problem for youth. Clearly, since they are the very youth who can be impacted, they are the closest to bringing about real solutions to the problem. It is important to provide them with the education necessary to make a serious impact on the problem. By supporting programs that engage youth in addressing this issue you do what the research suggests is most effective in dealing with social problems for young people. Arming young people with the research, knowledge, and programs to address this issue is perhaps one of the most cost-effective ways of creating long-term solutions to the problem.

Minnesota is very lucky to have the people, resources, and organizations that can assist with this issue. I’m sure, once you pass legislation addressing this issue, that you will see remarkable results in dealing with the overdose/drug addiction problem. Thank you for your willingness to take the steps necessary to involve young people in solutions to their own problems.

Sincerely,

Robert Shumer, Ph.D

Metropolitan State University (Community Faculty)

651-336-7777

**Members of the House Education Policy Committee,**

I am writing to express my strong support for **House File 2023 / Senate File 223**, which seeks to add eight crucial words—*“that includes overdose recognition, prevention, and response education”*—to Minnesota’s state health standards.

As a **Humphrey Policy Fellow and an advocate for community well-being**, I believe this amendment is a vital step toward addressing the urgent and growing crisis of substance use and overdose among young people. Schools play a critical role in equipping students with essential life-saving knowledge, and incorporating overdose education into the curriculum will empower them to recognize warning signs, take preventive measures, and respond effectively in emergencies.

The fact that this amendment was identified as the **#1 student priority** at the 2024 Changemakers event underscores its importance. Young people are directly witnessing the impacts of this crisis and have spoken clearly about their need for education that prepares them to protect themselves and their peers. Their leadership in advocating for this change is commendable and deserves our full support.

I urge you to **support this amendment** and ensure that Minnesota students receive the education necessary to navigate the realities of today’s public health landscape.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the well-being of our youth.

Sincerely,

**Ifrah Farah**

Humphrey Policy Fellow

# Letter of support for HF 2023

## From Dexter Paasch, Harding High School Junior, St Paul

Overdose is a major issue in the United States especially in cities, and this bill aims to help teach how to treat overdose and to notice the signs of it along with further teaching of fentanyl. This is something that I strongly believe should be added to the great State of Minnesota because I've seen it affect the people in my community and heard stories of how it has taken the lives of friends and family.

Even students in my own school talk about fentanyl and overdose like it's a joke. I don't believe that they have a full understanding of how big of a deal it is in our communities. That's why I believe that education of these substances should be required to be taught to students so they can understand the severity of the situation that we currently live in and possibly help teach others on how to help aid their community. Along with that, the proper education can help prevent students from experimenting with substances because when a person starts to use substances it is extremely hard to stop.

To help a community you must teach them. Otherwise they will never learn and this will continue to go on. So this is why I believe that this should become a requirement in the education system in Minnesota.

Madam Chair, and members of the Minnesota House Education Policy Committee,

My name is Maitreya Reeder. I am a junior at St. Anthony Village High School, and I currently serve as the 45th Minnesota Youth Secretary of State and a 2025 National Youth Advocate. I am also a participant in the Catalyst for Systems Change (CSC) Changemakers program, where I came up with the concept of this bill and have spent the last four months researching, lobbying, and gathering support. I would like to express my overwhelming belief in the inclusion of overdose prevention and response in the Minnesota Health Education Standards for many reasons.

Drug overdose is the current leading cause of accidental death in the US, taking over 100,000 lives per year according to the CDC. More than 80,000 of those deaths included an opioid. Opioid overdoses kill around 900-1,000 people per year in Minnesota according to 2023 statistics from the Minnesota Department of Health. However, research from the CDC shows that bystanders are present in more than one in three opioid overdoses, training would allow them to know administration procedures and increase incentives for the carrying of emergency naloxone. If bystanders were educated on the administration of naloxone, countless lives could be saved.

All school districts in Minnesota are required to meet standards for health curriculum, including mandated CPR and AED training, provided by a qualified staff member or first responder. According to research presented at an American Heart Association Conference and reported in Science Daily, CPR education in schools has been shown to link to higher survival rates in cardiac arrest emergencies. Research shows that 41.3% of people suffering out-of-hospital cardiac arrest were treated by a bystander in states that require CPR and AED training in high schools, versus only 36.1% of people treated in states that do not have this training. This shows that when training for lifesaving measures is implemented in schools, their goal of reducing related deaths is successful.

If overdose prevention and response education are inserted into curriculums, we will see a definite increase in lives saved due to more educated and prepared generations. Measures to protect the population from the dangers of fentanyl have not proven to be overwhelmingly successful, so educating students in emergency measures can be extremely valuable. As a society, one of our greatest resources is the work and motivations of our youth. This act will use that work and motivation to ensure a safer population in Minnesota. To ensure the protection and education of Minnesotans, I urge you to support this bill.

Maitreya Reeder

## Statement on HF 2023 – March 19, 2025

Hello Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Khalique Rogers**, and I serve as the **Executive Director of Catalyst for Systems Change**. My work is rooted in **lived experience**, having faced housing instability as a youth and knowing people who have abused drugs. Through my journey, I saw firsthand that **systemic issues—housing, education, and workforce development—are deeply interconnected**. Addressing them requires a **cross-sector, intergenerational approach** that ensures young people are not just part of the conversation but leading the solutions.

That's why I created the **Changemakers Program**—a statewide initiative that equips youth with the skills and platform to shape policy based on their lived experiences. **HF 2023 is a direct result of that work.**

At our 2024 Changemakers event, youth across Minnesota identified **overdose prevention education** as their **#1 legislative priority**. They **researched the gaps in current health education** and **saw the consequences in their own communities**. They're asking for a simple but powerful **clarification** of existing state law—ensuring that substance abuse education also includes **overdose recognition, prevention, and response education**.

We are **delighted that this effort has gained bipartisan support**. This is more than just a policy change—it's a **life-saving solution** designed by those most affected. The youth who worked on this bill will share their research and personal stories, and we **hope their research and leadership garners your support**.

Thank you.

More life,

Khalique

To Minnesota House K-12 Education Policy Committee Members:

From Chris Stewart

Re: Strong endorsement of HF 2023

As a former Minnesota public school board member, a current parent of public school students, and a Minnesotan, I strongly endorse HF 2023, which seeks to enhance health education standards by including critical education on overdose recognition, prevention, and response.

I have seen firsthand the devastating impact drug overdoses and addiction can have on students, families, and communities. Public schools play a crucial role in preparing young people not only academically but as informed and responsible citizens. By equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize, prevent, and respond to drug overdoses, we significantly increase their ability to protect themselves and others.

I am particularly proud to live in a state like Minnesota, where students actively engage in the civic process. The bipartisan support for this student-driven initiative highlights the state's commitment to empowering young voices. I would like you to support HF 2023 and show that Minnesota continues to prioritize all students' health, safety, and well-being.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Stewart

Madam Chair, and Members of the House Education Policy Committee:

My name is Jane Krentz, and I am writing to support the change to current law requested by students in HF 2023.

I am a former teacher and served as Vice Chair of the MN Senate Education Committee from 1993-1996, and was a member of the Education Committee until 2003. Subsequently, I worked at Hamline University and was the Director of an after-school program serving urban middle and high school youth at multiple locations in St. Paul and Maplewood.

HF 2023 is both timely and important, just as rapid response for someone who has overdosed is critical to their survival. Drugstores now sell Narcan to enable people to provide help to someone who has overdosed on opioids. It can restore normal breathing within 2 to 3 minutes in a person whose breath has slowed, or even stopped, as a result of opioid overdose. It seems prudent to give our young people the tools they would need to save a friend or stranger's life, if the situation ever arose.

We've likely all heard stories of accidental overdose. Can you imagine the horror felt by someone who watched their friend or classmate in such a situation. The horror would be compounded if they were helpless to do anything about it. Especially, if there were steps they could have taken that could have made a difference.

This is a prudent, common-sense addition to current law. I urge you to support HF 2023.

Sincerely,

Jane Krentz

14177 Paris Avenue N

Stillwater, MN 55082

612-581-6978

**DATE: March 17, 2025**

**TO: Members of the Minnesota House K-12 Education Policy Committee**

**FROM: Patti Haasch, MAAP STARS Co-Chair**

**RE: House File 2023/Senate File 223  
Suggested Clarification as an Amendment to ~ Subdivision 1 of Statue 120B.021**

As a 40+ year Minnesota public school educator and administrator, who has primarily worked with at-risk students in greater Minnesota, I am in full support of what the current high schoolers are recommending to add to what is already written in statue. I strongly believe we need to listen to their concerns.

Our High School Student Leaders are recommending adding seven words to clarify current language following the words to – ***“Substance Abuse:***

***“includes overdose recognition, prevention, and response training”***

They want to include this training in at least one required health class for all Minnesota Public High School students to take prior to graduation.

I appreciate this Committee’s considering honoring their request for something that can potentially save precious lives. They believe this is both a crucial and missing piece that should be added which is vital in preventing overdoses and opioid-related deaths of their peers. Their awareness and insights into how vital this is indicates their sincerity in bringing this to the Committee’s attention. I commend their courage to offer a simple solution to people having a better knowledge of lifesaving measures. My hope is that the Committee will heed their advice.

Thank You for your time,

Patti Haasch

To Members of the Minnesota House Education Policy Committee:

As a public school educator who has worked with urban and rural Minnesota "at risk" youth for more than 30 years, I'm writing to endorse and urge you to adopt HF 2023.

I agree strongly with the young people who initially proposed this: ensuring every youngster receives the information and training that they suggest will save lives. I'm also delighted to see that the bill has bi-partisan support in the MN House and Senate. Your demonstration that people who disagree strongly sometimes can find things to work on together is very important for young people to see. Thanks again for considering this. I urge you to adopt HF 2023.

Sincerely

Chris Thompson, Math and Science Teacher, Norse Area Learning Center  
[E:cct.0621@gmail.com](mailto:cct.0621@gmail.com) or [cthompson@isd138.org](mailto:cthompson@isd138.org)

## **Thomas E. Kottke, MD, MSPH testimony to the Minnesota Legislature March 19, 2025**

Members of the committee, members of the public. I am Thomas Kottke. I live at 571 Otis Avenue in Saint Paul, District 64A, and have practiced cardiology for 40 years at the University of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic Rochester, and HealthPartners until I retired in December 2024. During that time, I have also advocated for measures that improve community health because it is in this space that the greatest gains in health and well-being can be made, and a prosperous Minnesota depends on a healthy Minnesota.

Today I would like to address the student proposal to add eight words to [House File 2023](#) and Senate File 223.

Those words follow the words "substance abuse education" and add "that includes overdose recognition, prevention, and response education."

The latest Minnesota mortality statistics support the addition of this text. In the age 10-14 group, the total death rate is 16 per 100,000 and the rate of accidental poisoning is 1 per 100,000. Note that "accidental poisoning" is the medical term for death from overdose. By ages 20-34 the total death rate has increased 8-fold to 129 per hundred thousand and 32% of all deaths are from accidental poisoning. The rate of accidental poisoning has increased 40-fold. It shouldn't be this way. These are people in their prime of life.

When an individual suffers an overdose, I believe that it is rarely in the presence of a physician, a fire fighter, a police officer, or another individual trained in overdose treatment. It is in the presence of peers and friends who could help if they had the knowledge and the tools. Today the students are telling you that they want to help, and you can help them help by adding the text that will cause them to be trained in overdose recognition, prevention, and response.

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate your commitment to the people of Minnesota.

March 18, 2025

Dear House of Representatives –

I practiced primary care medicine in Stillwater and St. Paul for 30 years and also taught public health at the UMN for 10 years. I am writing in support of the addition to HF2023 that calls for the following language: “that includes overdose recognition, prevention, and response education”.

As you know, this addition is being requested by a group of students who are taking an active interest in public policy. I had the privilege of watching them in action at the Capitol last Fall when they hatched this idea. It was their #1 policy priority for 2025.

Sadly, deaths from opioid overdose have become a significant public health problem in the U.S., including Minnesota. Many of these overdose deaths occur in the presence of other people, so there is an opportunity to recognize the problem and intervene through the use of nasal naloxone. A number of my colleagues who work in high-risk areas carry nasal naloxone with them at all times.

A recent study from the UMN School of Public Health reports the following:

**Naloxone is far more effective when people who use drugs are not alone. Combining naloxone distribution with interventions to address solitary drug use could lead to a reduction in opioid overdose deaths by up to 37.4%.**

**Interventions aimed at increasing the likelihood of overdoses being witnessed have a significant impact on opioid overdose deaths. Even without reversal drugs, increasing witnessed overdoses by 20% to 60% could reduce deaths by 8.5% to 24.1%.**

Hence, the combination of public awareness of opioid overdose and the availability of nasal naloxone has the potential to reduce opioid deaths. The students’ concerns and their desire to act should be honored and commended. They are really putting the “public” into public health. I give them my full support.

Thanks for considering this important addition to HF2023.

James F. Hart, MD

Stillwater, MN

