

TO: House Education Policy Committee
RE: **HF 874**
SUMMARY: **OPPOSE HF 874**

March 7, 2021

We would like to voice our opposition to HF 874.

We see nothing wrong with the current wording of the MN Constitution regarding the education of our children. Why change it?

Our opinion is that the proposed amendment to the State Constitution is more about usurping power from parents and local school systems and transferring this power to the state, than providing the best possible education for MN children. The state already has the ability to develop a strong public education system as an option available for all students. It should not be so bold as to claim this is the best choice of education for all students and demand to set the standards for everyone.

Indeed, public school education has drastically been undermined these last 12 months in MN, due to the government's restrictions. I spoke this week to a public school special ed teacher who is doing classes via Zoom. I asked her how it was going. She gave me an eye roll. Her kids can't focus via the computer for class. I also hear this over and over again from frustrated parents! Public school is failing Minnesota's students, in spite of MN spending \$12,975/student/year¹. However, those who are homeschooling have had little interruption.

Our family chose the homeschool option for all our children (Pre-K through high school). We continued to home educate them through high school **at their request**. In so doing we were able to provide:

- An unbeatable student to teacher ratio
- An individualized plan to accelerate strengths and interests
- The ability to customize teaching around the learning style of our students
- Flexibility to take school with us wherever we went
- An environment where student safety and bullying were not issues
- Publicly available opportunities, including: city league youth sports, 4-H clubs/fairs, outside classes from MN Zoo, Como Zoo, Three Rivers Parks, etc., and lots of field trips
- An education where our students consistently scored many grade levels above their peers on the yearly standardized tests

Our adult children are both employed, one even owning his own business, and one still taking trade school classes. They both are very good citizens, active in voting and working the election polls. They were better prepared than I was to participate in society. They know how to interact with both adults and

children. In short, they had a very well-rounded education, and all at our expense, saving MN thousands of tax dollars!

We appreciated having the opportunity to provide this type of education which we felt was best for our children. We would like to see this same option available to our grandchildren when that time arrives.

Kids are not cookie cutter people. They have their individual talents and preferences (as do adults). Multiplicity of educational choices is a PLUS, not a detriment. It adds to society, not subtracts.

This bill would affect not just homeschooling, but also private, immersion, and charter schools, as all these options are not “public schools”.

Thanks for your consideration as you look out for the rights of Minnesota families to freely choose which educational options are best for each of their students.

Signed,
3 Voters:

Kevin Mikkelson, Karen Mikkelson, & Bobby Mikkelson

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