

March 9, 2023

Honorable Steve Cwodzinski  
3207 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Cwodzinski:

Thank you for the time and effort you and your committee have put into the omnibus education policy bill, SF 1311. We have appreciated your willingness to meet with us and listen to our feedback throughout the session. As you know, our organizations have consistently advocated for allowing our locally elected school boards, working with their administrators, students, parents, and communities, to make decisions about curriculum and instruction. We have also urged legislators to refrain from enacting new mandates, particularly unfunded mandates.

Collectively, our organizations' memberships reach far and wide across Minnesota. Locally elected school board members throughout Minnesota, rural and metropolitan superintendents, principals, and special education, curriculum, and technology leaders from all corners of the state. Together, we offer the following areas of support and concern within the bill.

We support:

- Article 1, Section 1 – repealing the successful completion of a teacher competency exam.
- Article 1, Section 3 – greater flexibility with the required academic standards in math and science.
- Article 1, Section 16 – prohibiting an institution, in the application of a concurrent enrollment course, from requiring a faith statement during the application process or basing any part of the admission decision on a student's race, creed, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations.
- Article 1, Section 26 – modifications to the duties of the School Trust Lands director.
- Article 1, Section 31 – repealing the required civics exam.
- Article 2, Section 4 – providing contact information for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for students in middle school, junior high, or high school.
- Article 2, Section 5 – the establishment of the Online Instruction Act.
- Article 2, Section 6 – the revised definition of an English learner.

We have concerns about the following:

- Article 1, Section 6 – additional course requirements and credits in the areas of civics and personal finance.
- Article 2, Section 3 - Requiring a school board to adopt a written policy to address malicious and sadistic conduct. Current MSBA model policy already covers this.
- Article 5, Section 4 – requiring the use of non-exclusionary discipline in ALL cases and not providing resources necessary for staffing and facilities.

- Article 6, Section 1 – adding new reporting requirements under the World’s Best Workforce statute.
- Article 6, Section 5 – requiring a written policy on curriculum. Curriculum decisions should be made by locally elected school boards working with their staff, parents, and communities.
- Article 6, Section 7 – the elimination of pathways to Tier 2 and Tier 3 teacher licensure.
- Article 6, Section 10 - allowing Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) teachers to obtain continuing contract status.
- Article 6, Section 12 – reducing the number of required instructional days for a probationary teacher.

Thank you for your consideration and we stand ready to assist you in any way we can over the next weeks to pass legislation that meets the needs of our students and our communities.

Sincerely,

Association of Metropolitan School Districts



MN Association of School Administrators



MN Association of Secondary School Principals



MN Elementary School Principals Association



MN Rural Education Association



MN School Boards Association



Schools for Equity in Education



copy: Senate Education Policy Committee Members