



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Walz

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February 18, 2021

Via Email

Representative Melissa Hortman
Speaker of the House
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Kurt Daudt
Minority Leader
267 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Paul Gazelka
Majority Leader
3113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Susan Kent
Minority Leader
2227 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Legislative Leaders:

Thank you for meeting with me yesterday to discuss updates to the Safe Learning Plan. This letter is to memorialize that conversation and to reiterate that I am respectfully requesting you take swift action to pass HF1064/SF973, Summer Education Package, which Lieutenant Governor Flanagan and I have submitted to you, by April 15, 2021. I appreciate that the House has already provided the Minnesota Department of Education the opportunity to walk through the summer package on February 16. I also appreciate that the Senate afforded the Department an opportunity to present the package on February 17. I encourage both chambers to continue moving the bills forward. Your quick action will support over 880,000 Minnesota students who have experienced learning disruptions due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools across the state. The pandemic has exacerbated existing disparities in education. As schools reopen to in-person learning, we must help students recover and catch up on learning. It is a top priority of this administration's work, a pillar of our budget, and frankly, our responsibility as lawmakers.

The Lieutenant Governor and I have heard loud and clear from students, families, educators, and school leaders the urgent need to prepare for the 2021-2022 school year. I am sure you have heard this as well. One element of that preparation is academic, and wellbeing support this summer. HF1064/SF973 includes expanding summer learning from early learning to K-12 to post-secondary bridging to adult basic education. The bill also provides additional mental health and wellbeing supports for students as well as builds infrastructure for community and neighborhood partnerships to expand tutoring, mentoring, and other wrap-around supports.

Students will be entering the 2021-2022 school year having had different learning and life experiences during the pandemic. Some students are able to learn in-person for the entire 2020-2021 school year. Other students experienced trauma and are not able to safely engage in in-person learning or activities. They may have lost a loved one, they may have been away from friends and

family, or they may have not fully participated in traditional learning and enrichment activities. It is our responsibility to meet students where they are and support both their academic and social emotional needs as we move forward together. Traditionally, summer programming has been about remediation. However, this year all students should be afforded the opportunity to reinforce what they learned over the last school year, or perhaps experience or learn something for the first time.

The Minnesota Legislature is integral to supporting a strong public education system. That system has been stressed more in the past year than ever before. One critical way to recover and rebuild our public schools is to support our students as they safely return into classrooms. The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Acts have provided Minnesota with a total of \$1.089 billion—I thank you for CARES approval and look forward to CRRSA approval—to support local needs, and technology, summer school, mental health, and other supports for students and families. While we will continue to emphasize the need for additional supports to the Biden/Harris Administration, federal partners, and our federal delegation, it is unclear whether a third stimulus will be enacted in time. Therefore, it is crucial to expeditiously provide focused state supports for this summer.

Many schools are already making decisions for this summer. School leaders are solidifying plans and setting budgets for programming, staffing, health and safety protocol, transportation, and other aspects of summer activities now. Therefore, having certainty of summer funding is critical by mid-April. Without immediate action by the Legislature, hundreds of thousands of Minnesota students and their families will face uncertainty about access to academic and mental health supports over the summer. Together we must move quickly to make the needed investments to allow schools to meaningfully plan for these enhanced academic and mental health service opportunities. In order to prepare thoughtfully and under the additional pressures the pandemic has brought, schools need a financial commitment from the State. **To allow for proper implementation and ensure maximum support, the Legislature should appropriate the necessary funds provided for in HF1064/SF973 to address this immediate concern no later than April 15, 2021.**

I welcome your ideas on how to support education recovery and catch up across the state, including the proposal summarized above and items in HF4. Commissioner Ricker, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Mueller, and our staffs stand ready to work with you and answer any questions about this urgent request for partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. Walz", written in a cursive style.

Tim Walz
Governor

cc: Representative Rena Moran
Senator Julie Rosen
Representative Jim Davnie
Senator Roger Chamberlain
Representative Ron Kresha
Senator Chuck Wiger