



*An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth*

Dear Representative Huot and Mr. Smith,

We greatly appreciate your attendance at the Minnesota Youth Council (MYC) hearing at Youth Day at the Capitol on February 24, 2020. We value your presentation and testimony on HF 1363, regarding the allocation of funds to the Support Our Students grant program, which received a vote of 26-4 in favor. Thank you for your commitment to an issue important to the MYCC and the youth of Minnesota. Given the attention that this issue demands, we appreciate your legislative support in ensuring our schools get the resources they need. Although the Council supports the intent behind this bill and the change it seeks to create, we have a few concerns and suggestions that should be addressed.

With an issue as pressing to youth such as this, it is imperative for us to establish a method of progress reporting to determine: (1) the ways in which school districts are utilizing these grants, (2) the effectiveness of this program's application and awarding system, through the use of publicly-available, statistics-based data, and (3) whether additional funding is necessary for the continuation and success of this program. The progress reporting method would provide valuable insight as to the structural needs of this program, which may strengthen its hopeful continuation. Assuming the addition of the amendment, which was mutually well-received at our hearing, the MYCC supports making this grants program a means of sustained funding for schools. At this time, the MYCC supports the inclusion of additional language in lines 2.26 and 2.27 to support the progress reporting method and technical assistance that the administration of this grant program may require.

Additionally, with regards to lines 2.9-2.10 on the appropriation of grants, the MYCC is concerned about the way money will be split between metro and nonmetro counties. Given the greater number of students and schools in the metro area in comparison to Greater Minnesota, we find it alarming that the money is split equally between these two regions. As a Council made up of students from all over the state, we would like to see the grant money split proportionally rather than equally to best support all school districts in Minnesota.

Thank you for taking the time to present HF 1363 to the Minnesota Youth Council Committee. Providing adequate mental health resources in schools has continued to stay one of our top priorities as a council and we appreciate your support. We look forward to following this bill and continuing the cooperation of the Council and your efforts.

Sincerely,

The Minnesota Youth Council