

March 26, 2025

To: Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy
Committee

Subject: Support for HF1538 – Advancing Registered Teacher Apprenticeship

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of a cohort of school districts across Greater Minnesota to express strong support of HF1538, which provides essential funding to expand and sustain registered teacher apprenticeship programs across Minnesota. My name is Sara Paul, and I serve as Superintendent of North Branch Area Public Schools. I am also a member of the Department of Labor and Industry's Apprenticeship Advisory Board and I represent one of the three approved sponsors of registered teacher apprenticeship programs in Minnesota.

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship programs are not theoretical—they are active and growing. In Minnesota's first year of implementation, 49 registered teacher apprentices are completing the first year of a two-year registered apprenticeship. 100 percent of apprentices under our sponsorship are on track to earn Tier 3 teaching licenses by June 2026. Expanding on this success, we have partnered with school districts across the state to launch the Forward Together Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC).

Each of the current 3 sponsors approved by the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) work closely with school districts to determine licensure priorities. For example, two other sponsors are designing cohorts in elementary licensure, due to needs identified with their respective district partners. This fall, the licensure priority for our Forward Together JATC is a registered teacher apprenticeship in a dual licensure pathway for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD)—two of Minnesota's most urgent special education needs in Greater Minnesota. Our Forward Together JATC has also submitted a Letter of Intent to DOLI and is co-designing a new registered teacher apprenticeship cohort for 5–12 Math licensure.

Last year's legislative funding supported just one of the three approved programs. No funding was allocated to Greater Minnesota apprentices and we are incurring costs out of our general fund for this work, leaving access gaps.

Despite this, 100 percent of our sponsored apprentices remain on track to graduate and earn tier 3 licensure. HF1538 is an opportunity to extend support to our sponsor/ Forward Together JATC to ensure appropriated funds maximize impact to those in classrooms—not into new bureaucratic systems that are likely to have diminished reach into Greater Minnesota’s small and medium sized school districts.

Thank you for your time and for supporting results-driven, community-rooted solutions to Minnesota’s teacher shortage.

Sincerely,



Sara Paul
North Branch Area
Public Schools



Robert Routh
St. Charles Public Schools



Melissa Sparks
Henning School District



Brian Dietz
Chisago Lakes School District



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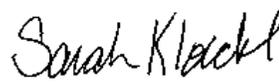
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