



Minnesota Autism Council

Working Group of the Senate Human Services Reform Committee

February 10, 2021

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

**Executive
Committee
Chair**
Jules Edwards

WHEREAS The Minnesota Autism Council recognizes that, despite often heroic efforts by teachers and staff, distance learning has not been working for many students with disabilities and many students have not been able to participate in distance learning in a way that benefits them;

Vice Chair
Tom Cox

WHEREAS, research has documented that students with disabilities, students of color, and students from lower economic strata frequently have poorer outcomes from distance learning than the general student population;

Policy Liaison
Maren Christenson
Hofer

WHEREAS, the Council recognizes a need to ensure that students who have lost months of educational time should be provided with an opportunity to make up for that lost time;

Member Advocate
Jean Bender

WHEREAS, legal processes exist to provide "compensatory education," but these processes remain inaccessible for many;

Recording Secretary
Tiffany Tully

WHEREAS, advocacy organizations have proposed a mechanism to which would direct districts to proactively offer "make-up"; or recovery education to students who were not able to benefit from distance learning during the pandemic. This would take the burden off of families to prove a student's educational loss during the pandemic and instead create a mechanism for school districts to proactively offer recovery services;

Committee Staff:
Tom Brennan
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WHEREAS, this effort is intended to be funded through federal Covid Relief Funds;

WHEREAS, The Council believes this to be a more equitable distribution method than the current model, which advantages those families with the most access and resources, and disadvantages those with the least;

THEREFORE, The Minnesota Autism Council resolves to support legislation brought forward by advocacy organizations including The Arc MN, The Disability Law Center, and the Multicultural Autism Action Network that would create a mechanism to complement the existing compensatory education processes and direct districts to provide pro-active educational support for those students who regressed, did not meet goals, or were otherwise unable to benefit from distance learning during the pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jules Edwards".

Jules Edwards, Chairperson
Minnesota Autism Council