

Dear School Psychologists:

The House and Senate K-12/E/12 education bills have been passed by the respective bodies and are now being reviewed and acted upon by the K-12 education conference committee. Their first meeting was last evening and they will be meeting again tonight. Their work as a conference committee must be completed by May 7th. Then the bills will need to go back to the House and Senate for approval. Then onto the governor.

The House bill is HF 2 and the Senate bill is SF 1328/SF 3. HF 2 continues to have the mandate which allows districts to levy for an extra 3 dollars for student support services. In the Senate bill this mandate has been deleted. If the House version is to prevail, legislators need to hear now from student support services staff like yourself. The legislators who need to hear from you are your legislators and legislators on the conference committee. I know the counselors and social workers are taking action. I believe that legislators need to be reminded how important safe schools are and how they are made safe, in part, by having sufficient student support services staff on board. Policies are meaningless unless there is staff to carry them out.

This was part of the testimony which occurred in the Senate K-12 Education Committee when the bullying bills were discussed this session. Members of the K-12/E-12 Education Conference Committee are as follows: Senator LeRoy Stumpt, Thief River Falls; Senator Chuck Wiger, North St. Paul; Senator Kathy Saltzman, Woodbury; Senator Kevin Dahle, Northfield; Senator Gen Olson, Minnetrista. All are DFL Senators with the exception of Senator Olson. House members are Rep. Mindy Greiling, Roseville; Rep. Carlos Mariani, St. Paul; Rep. Nora Slawik, Maplewood; Rep. John Ward, Brainard; Rep. Pat Garofalo, Farmington. All are DFL with the exception of Rep. Garofalo.

If any of these conference committee members are your legislators, it is particularly important that they hear from you on the three dollars mandate. However, all legislators need to hear because they will all be voting on the K-12 education bill again on the House and Senate floors when it comes out of conference committee. Please be active. As the recipient of our legislative award said at our midwinter conference. if your legislators don't hear from you, someone else will be heard and not necessarily in a way which you would favor. PLEASE ACT NOW.!

Ralph D. Maves
MSPA Lobby8st