

Updated 2/7/2023

### **MINNDEPENDENT Legislation:**

**Top Priority: GUIDANCE COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.** Under the current law, nonpublic students are entitled to counseling and guidance for services for students enrolled in grades 7-12. Under the proposed legislation, MINNDEPENDENT supports extending services to students in grades K-12. This legislation garnered bipartisan support during the 2021-22 Legislative Session when the bill passed the Senate in 2021 and the House in 2022.

**Priority: SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.** The coalition supports legislation providing a new per student revenue aid allocation to school districts, intermediate schools districts, tribal schools, charter schools and nonpublic schools to ensure all our school buildings are safe and secure for students and staff. With the rise in security threats and mental health challenges, it is important to ensure that all our schools have the resources to protect students and staff.

**Priority: TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND POLICY CHANGE.** The coalition is recommending both fiscal and policy related changes to the current statutes regarding transportation funding for nonpublic students. First, the coalition supports additional funding to school districts for transportation services for public and nonpublic students. Second, the coalition supports a policy change that would allow school districts and non-public schools to find alternative transportation arrangements if they mutually agree.

### **MINNDEPENDENT Watch List:**

1. **UNIVERSAL MEALS FOR ALL STUDENTS.** MINNDEPENDENT is working to ensure participation in this program is voluntary for nonpublic schools. The bill was recently amended and allows for voluntary participation for nonpublic schools. We expect the bill will pass the House and Senate within the next 3-4 weeks.
2. **EDUCATIONAL RECORDS SUBMISSION TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS.** The Minnesota Department of Education is proposing additional requirements for some nonpublic schools as it relates to submission of educational records to school districts. This provision was included in the MDE policy bill. MINNDEPENDENT sent a formal letter opposing this provision as written by MDE. The policy bill was heard by the House Education Policy Committee on February 7 and the bill was laid over for possible future consideration.
3. **PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE.** The bill moving through the House and Senate mandates paid family medical leave for all employers and employees with no exception.

If passed this would be the most universal paid medical leave program in the country. The Senate author has indicated she has no plans to exempt schools from this mandate.

4. **EARNED SICK AND SAFE TIME LEAVE.** Modeled after the ordinances adopted in Minneapolis and St. Paul, this policy would be in effect for all employers in Minnesota. It is expected this legislation will pass the legislature prior to adjournment.
  
5. **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS FOR BUS DRIVERS AND HOURLY EMPLOYEES.** This legislation would give bus drivers and hourly workers the ability to access the unemployment insurance fund during summer months. At this point, the legislation does not include nonpublic schools but we are verifying this with legal counsel in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

**TIMELINES:**

- January 3: Minnesota Legislature convened to begin the 2023-24 Legislative Session
- March 10: First committee deadline for policy bills only
- March 25: Second committee deadline for policy bills only
- April 4: Third committee deadline for finance bills
- April 5-10: Easter/Passover break (legislature not on session)
- April 11: Legislature returns from break
- May 22: Legislature must adjourn the regular session