

June 12, 2020

To: St. Paul City Council

From: Anne McInerney, McKinney Vento Liaison, St. Paul Public Schools

RE: Support for Tenant Protections

I am writing in support of the Tenant Protections put forth by the St. Paul City Council. As the McKinney Vento Homeless Liaison for St. Paul Public Schools, our team works with families all the time that are losing their housing from no fault of their own. Families are often told that the building is being sold, that there are needed upgrades and subsequent rent increases, or there was a complaint against the tenant. Families are afraid of asking for basic repairs for fear of eviction.

Once a family is evicted or is forced to leave, they have difficulty finding another rental unit. Landlords are charging two to three times rent as a deposit. For a family on a fixed income, this is impossible. An eviction on record affects years of future rental possibilities and the expungement process may be too daunting.

Families are forced into homelessness. Forced into a system of waiting lists to get into emergency shelter, overcrowding in doubled up situations, or living in a car. As the homeless program in St. Paul Public Schools, we see the effects of trauma, the unknown of where our students will sleep, where they will eat, and if they are safe. We see the mental health effects of adults that fall into depressions, increase anxiety of the unknown, and fear for their own safety. Educational engagement drops, the ability to stay on task is more difficult and attendance declines. The State of Minnesota shows a 40% graduation rate of students that have experienced homelessness and about a 30% proficiency rate in reading and math. Housing makes a difference!

On behalf of Project REACH in the St. Paul Public Schools, we support the Tenant Protection Program.



Anne McInerney, LICSW