

## Sheldon, Tina (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Julie Alkatout <jalkatout@germanschool-mn.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 9, 2021 3:03 PM  
**To:** HRAHearing (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** In support of bonds for charter schools

Dear Councilmember Tolbert,

I am writing as the parent of children who attend a public charter school located in St. Paul, and as the school board chairperson of that public charter school, the Twin Cities German Immersion School. As you know, our school relied upon St. Paul's conduit revenue bonds to renovate our school campus. I thank you for making this financing possible for our school.

Two important lessons our society learned during this pandemic is how absolutely critical public schools are to the functioning of society, and how vital it is to provide school facilities that are updated for safety and functionality for students and their educators. Our school renovation, with the additional square footage providing additional large classrooms, several new hand-washing stations, and modern ventilation system was absolutely essential to providing the environment needed to provide some in-person teaching and learning this COVID school year.

Please do not adopt a blanket policy against issuing conduit revenue bonds to public charter schools.

Charter schools are an important and valuable option for Minnesota families, and many families choose to send their children to the unique public charter schools located in St. Paul. St. Paul is home to some excellent charter schools designed specifically to meet the needs of a variety of students and families. School choice incentivizes school leaders to provide the highest quality of education, improving the performance of all schools. A blanket policy blocking the issuance of conduit revenue bonds would stand in the way of progress for schools that are effectively serving Minnesota's youth.

Nonprofits, including charter schools, are a huge asset to St. Paul, ensuring a strong system of services and supports, and should continue to qualify for the conduit revenue bonds. The proposed resolution singles charter schools as the only nonprofit that cannot qualify for these bonds. This is an issue of equity among all students that traditional public and public charter schools serve.

Governor Walz and the Minnesota Department of Education emphasized that despite all the challenges with providing effective distance learning, the education schools provide this COVID year needs to be equitable among all students. Please see how the proposed resolution would work against equity for all students. The proposal will require charter schools to spend more money on financing, when public charter schools already operate with an inequitable budget compared to traditional public schools.

Please do not advance counter-productive policy on this issue, rather, please engage with local schools and the families they serve to more deeply understand community needs and how St. Paul can support all students, regardless of the school they attend.

Thank you for your commitment to our children and community,

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,  
*Julie A. Alkatout* | [she/her // sie/ihr](#)  
Chair, Board of Directors

Twin Cities German Immersion School  
1031 Como Ave. St. Paul, MN  
*The Innovative Education of the Whole Child through German Immersion*

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