

## Sheldon, Tina (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Sara Klarstrom <sklarstrom@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 8, 2021 8:15 PM  
**To:** HRAHearing (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Bonds for the benefit of Charter School Projects

My name is Sara Klarstrom. I may not live in St. Paul, but my Daughter attends Metro Deaf School, which is a charter school and the only charter school in MN serving Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing students. MDS serves not only children who reside in St. Paul, but also over 30 other school districts across MN and eastern WI.

I am sure you are all aware that funding options for Charter Schools are quite limited to begin with, and bonds are one of the few options out there for charters to gain funding to continue supporting the children they serve. I hope you will all reconsider moving forward with this resolution as it could certainly harm some of the most marginalized students in your community, along with other students in your neighboring communities.

The impact that MDS has made on my daughter is nothing outside of incredible. We learned that our daughter was Deaf when she was born. At the time we lived in the St. Michael area and special education resources were split between 3 separate school districts. After trying hearing aids, and a cochlear implant, we made little progress in her ability to hear. We decided to move to the Maple Grove area knowing that MDS was a strong option for her if we continued to struggle with any verbal language development. At the time Maple Grove-Osseo had a stronger special education program especially for kids that are hard of hearing and was much closer if we needed to choose MDS as her option for education. We learned that our child would not hear, and we decided that she needed to be fully immersed in her Deaf culture and use her native language of American Sign Language to communicate for the rest of her life. We tried any and all avenues to get our child placed at MDS, but our district refused -- so we made a decision to parent place our child at MDS at the age of 3 so she could fully learn ASL, be around others who understand her needs and give her exposure to the culture that she belongs to.

Fast forward 3 years, and our daughter is thriving, and performing at and at times above her kindergarten hearing peers -- all thanks to Metro Deaf School!

There are many outlying benefits to having all schools, whether public intermediate districts or charter schools that serve the vastly unique needs of all children in MN, including new business coming to St. Paul as a benefit (before my daughter attending MDS, it was rare that our family spent time in St. Paul, now we frequent events, and businesses) -- as do other families that have children attending school at one of the many charters in the area. I would strongly ask you to reconsider the motion to pass this resolution and to continue to benefit the needs of our diverse students. These charter schools, not only MDS but those serving the needs of often the most vulnerable and underrepresented students (racially, economically and oppressed) in the metro.

Please think about the educational needs of all children and please put those needs above politics.

Thank you for taking the time to read, and I sincerely hope that this resolution does not move forward.

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Sara Klarstrom