



## **Metro Deaf School-Minnesota North Star Academy**

May 26, 2010

MDS-MNSA Staff, Families, Alumni, Board and Community Members:

It is with much satisfaction and relief that I inform you that Governor Pawlenty signed our legislation yesterday - HF 3329 made it! This bill will allow MDS-MNSA to have better cash flow, thus ensuring we can remain afloat during these tight times. While the bill is "revenue neutral", it will allow our school to receive accelerated payments from the MN Department of Education at 90/10 ratio (vs. 73/27).

We owe a debt of gratitude to our Legislators in both the House and Senate. Representative Mariani (House) and Senator Saltzman (Senate) were the authors of our bills when we began way back in January. In the "Eleventh Hour" of the session, Chair of the Education Committee in the House, Representative Greiling, and Chair of the Education Committee in the Senate, Senator Stumpf, offered the amendment to the bill in their respective meetings. Both the House and the Senate passed it with no opposition: on the Senator floor it passed 60 to 0; it passed again in the House 130 to 0. They believed in us and understood our need for it to succeed! It then proceeded to the Governor's desk. With his signature yesterday, history was made!

The power of your messages to the Legislators and the Governor was "heard" and your voices made a difference. I cannot thank you enough.

I also want to thank Mary Hartnett, from the Commission of Deaf/Hard of Hearing, for the hundreds of hours she spent ensuring this bill remained a priority and on the radar screen of the "key" people at the Legislature. Mary was instrumental in training me and several Board members in this process of getting a bill drafted, authored, "carried to committee" and then passed. She was with us all the way, championing our efforts. Her dedication to this task is appreciated and admired by all of us affected by this legislation. We will be forever grateful to the Commission for its work empowering programs that affect the lives of Deaf citizens.

We will now move forward with the Minnesota Department of Education. MDE has also been very supportive as we worked through this bill. Their collaboration with us to find a solution has been most beneficial.

Thank you, again. The system worked for us. This is a proud day for MDS-MNSA!