[Your Organization Letterhead Here]

Date

Legislator Name

and address

(found at <http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/>)

Dear (legislator’s name):

Thank you for your continued efforts to support public education in Minnesota. This letter is in regard to the Success for the Future (SftF) funding outlined in Governor Dayton’s budget proposal.

SftF attempts to address the basic educational needs of American Indian children in Minnesota. However, in its current state the program falls significantly short of reaching all of our American Indian children.

This program is currently a competitive grant process which is underfunded, resulting in less than half of the districts with 10 or more American Indian children receiving funding. These students are in among the poorest areas of our state. Achievement and graduation data of these students significantly lags behind all other ethnic/racial groups. If Minnesota is serious about closing the achievement gap, reliable financial support is critical.

Governor Dayton’s proposal would eliminate the competitive nature of the grant allowing districts to develop sustainable programming without the fear of losing funding. Districts work with their local Indian Parent Advisory Committees to develop programs and services tailored to their children’s needs. Such programming includes but is not limited to Indian family-to-school liaisons, counselors, mental health staff, tutoring, cultural enrichment, native language, and staff development.

We are grateful for Governor’s Dayton’s recognition of SftF as an important mechanism to assist districts with meeting their students’ needs. As an alternative to the current formula, we would prefer a formula that takes into account the number of American Indian children attending school in a district as well as the poverty that can hinder their success. As a legislator for our region, we are requesting that you support SftF by supporting the Governor’s request for increased funding as well as a non-competitive formula that is based on the number of American Indian children served living in poverty. With input and guidance from a member committee, the Minnesota Rural Education Association has created a SftF funding formula that holds current SftF districts harmless and provides a good start towards an equitable solution.

Thank you for your consideration,

(Organization name and signatures)