

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

May 7, 2019

Education Conference Committee
5 State Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Members of the Education Conference Committee,

As a statewide coalition of disability advocacy organizations, we want to thank you for your work on behalf of all Minnesota children. Students with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by suspensions, expulsions, and seclusions. We want to share our support for the nonexclusionary discipline language in the House Education Omnibus bill. We hope you will adopt the important provisions listed below to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

The House Education Omnibus bill requires that schools notify the family in the event of a dismissal in addition to sharing the strategies the school used to prevent the dismissal. This language would require schools to notify families before the dismissal occurs. This notification can help parents work with their child and with the school to address the issues leading to dismissal and hopefully prevent the dismissal from happening.

The House Education Omnibus bill both defines and supports data collection for pupil withdrawal agreements. Having information on pupil withdrawal agreements will allow our organizations to better understand why students are leaving their schools. This information will also help us understand how schools are using the practice of agreements in lieu of expulsions. With this information, we can work with families and schools to develop proactive strategies to reduce future pupil withdrawals. Additionally, this language still allows students the ability to transfer schools as an alternative to dismissal.

Students can often lose academic progress or fall behind their peers as a result of a dismissal. The House Education Omnibus bill eliminates dismissals for prekindergarten children. This will prevent young children from falling behind their peers during their early years. Moreover, the House Education Omnibus ensures that schools will provide alternative education services for long-term dismissals. We believe this will help students continue learning during a long-term dismissal.

Autism Society of Minnesota ausm.org (651) 647-1083	Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota efmn.org (651) 287-2300	Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance braininjurymn.org (612) 378-2742	PACER Center, Inc. PACER.org (952) 838-9000	Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of MN pwsa-usa.org/MN (763) 242-9074	Proof Alliance proofalliance.org (651) 917-2370	The Arc Minnesota arcmn.org (952) 920-0855
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Finally, the House Education Omnibus bill instructs the school and family to develop a readmission plan for students that have been dismissed. This plan can help students come back to their school ready to learn with the supports they need to be successful.

Thank you for considering our perspective on nonexclusionary disciplinary practices. Please contact Sarah Clarke for additional information at sclarke@hyldenlaw.com or 952.201.4654.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Godfrey
Assistant Director, PACER Center
Member of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities

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