

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

January 23, 2023

Education Policy Committee
1100 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. W.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Cwodzinski and Members of the Education Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities, we are writing to express support to Senate File 183, Senator Maye Quade's bill to end withholding recess as discipline measure.

As advocates we hear countless stories from children who have recess withheld as a form of punishment. The science clearly shows us that withholding recess does not improve a child's behavior. On the contrary, we know that recess is an essential part of a child's day and that children need the opportunity to reset their bodies and their minds. Recess also provides an essential opportunity to develop social skills in less structured environments. Studies by the American Academy of Pediatrics have also demonstrated students are more attentive and better able to perform school tasks following recess.

We are concerned that recess detentions, like most forms of discipline, are disproportionately used on children with disabilities, children from communities of color, and especially children with intersecting identities. We frequently hear stories from parents where recess is withheld when a student is unable to complete work on time due to executive function issues or may be unable to sit still or remain quiet due to attention deficits. Withholding recess in these cases is counterproductive and has the effect of punishing a child for their disability.

We strongly support SF 183 and believe that withholding recess as a form of punishment is a practice which should come to an end.

Coalition for Children with Disabilities

Autism Society of Minnesota • The Arc Minnesota • Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota Epilepsy
Foundation of Minnesota • Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center •
Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance • Minnesota Council on Disability
Multicultural Autism Action Network • PACER Center
Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota • Proof Alliance