

Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals



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(Via email delivery)

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Senator Steve Cwodzinski, Chair
Education Policy Committee
3207 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Julia Coleman
Ranking Minority Member
Education Policy Committee
2302 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Concerns on HF1269 SF1311

Dear Cwodzinski and Minority Ranking Member Coleman:

Minnesota's secondary school principals are deeply concerned by several provisions contained in SF 1311. If enacted, we believe the provisions will have significant unintended consequences on individual students, school climate, safety and resources. We have been actively engaged in discussions to change the provisions, but to date we have not seen any significant progress in these discussions.

The language in the bill requires the use of nonexclusionary discipline in all cases. Nonexclusionary discipline is an effective tool used by principals every day in Minnesota schools. But many cases involve issues that warrant the suspension of a student. We believe it is best left to the discretion of school principals when the cases involve racism, sexual harassment, bullying, drug possession, theft, or threats. The bill takes the option of suspension away in the majority of these cases.

Minnesota principals are committed to addressing the issue of racial disparities in suspensions. We believe the better focus would be to identify those schools with significant disparities and provide supports to those sites. Such a plan would mirror our states approach to other areas such as attendance, graduation rates and academic progress.

We are concerned that the addition of a 72-hour appeals process for all decisions regarding discipline will result in a misdirection of resources. The bill mandates this new complaint review process with no funding. Schools are required to make conclusions, findings and recommendations on any discipline complaint within 3 days under the bill. We believe existing processes are sufficient.

We hope to work with you as the bill progresses.

Robert Driver
MASSP Executive Director

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MASSP President