



March 6, 2023

Minnesota Senate Education Policy Committee
3207 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and Senate Education Policy Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on the Education Policy bill SF1311.

(1) Please expand the ban on seclusion to third grade.

Though Legal Aid is grateful for the ban on seclusion for our youngest learners birth to pre-kindergarten, it's time for Minnesota to further eliminate this harmful and traumatic practice for the youngest children in elementary school. Seclusion does not help our youngest children build skills. It does not keep students or staff safe.

While ending seclusion for young children may result in more physical holds, Legal Aid supports well-trained adults using this practice in lieu of harmful isolation. A child in distress should not be locked into a space alone. These padded, solitary confinement rooms with blocked egress evoke extreme stress responses for young children. Furthermore, successful schools and educators can use other positive supports in lieu of seclusion: collaborative planning with families around de-escalation, professional development on problem-solving, and the creation of sensory profiles for individual children.

(2) Please reconsider including withdrawal agreements in student records.

Legal Aid is deeply concerned about the inclusion of pupil withdrawals in a student's educational record, as typically the main advantage of engaging in a pupil withdrawal agreement is not having an expulsion on a student's record. If there is an opportunity to re-consider this provision, we would welcome the discussion.

(3) Please include a ban on recess detention.

(4) Thank you for including further limitations on disciplinary dismissals for children kindergarten to third grade.

We appreciate your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's children and the ways you are striving to address racial disparities.

Sincerely,
Jessica L. Webster
Staff Attorney
Legal Services Advocacy Project