



February 17, 2025

Minnesota Senate Education Policy Committee
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3207
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Cwodzinski and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SF507.

LSAP and the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities. LSAP is the advocacy arm of Legal Aid and has provided legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of Minnesotans with low incomes since 1977.

Legal Aid is committed to ensuring all Minnesota children have access to a free appropriate public education and high-quality opportunities for growth. As such, Legal Aid has worked to address those policies and practices that disproportionately deny educational access to the children we represent.

Here, we applaud every effort to ensure families are guaranteed full and meaningful participation in the IEP process, which is often complicated, confusing, and arcane. Everyone agrees that parents and caregivers are in the best position to know what their child needs, which means we need parents as partners in a process that makes critical decisions about their child's education.

SF507 offers common sense access protections for parents who speak languages other than English at home and for parents with disabilities. This bill sets a floor for ensuring equitable access to the IEP process. We appreciate the efforts of school districts that are already going above and beyond these requirements to guarantee meaningful participation.

We ask you to seriously consider the voices of parents and caregivers who have not experienced fair or meaningful participation in their child's IEP process and to consider how setting this floor for participation would address those barriers.

We appreciate your consideration of this important legislation.

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