



March 3, 2021

Education Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

SUBJECT: HF 951

Chair Richardson and Members of the Education Policy Committee,

The Multicultural Autism Action Network is writing to express support for House File 951, Chair Richardson's bill to eliminate dismissals for students in kindergarten through third grade.

The 2017 Department of Human Rights report tells us that students of color received 66 percent of all suspensions and expulsions, even though they were only 31 percent of the student population. It tells us that students with disabilities received 43 percent of all suspensions and expulsions, but only represent 14 percent of the student population. And we know that for students who dual identify, the numbers are even more staggering.

When we remove children from the classroom we deprive them of the right to learn the lessons that are so badly for those that struggle with emotional regulation:

- How to recognize when they are feeling overwhelmed.
- Where to go for help when they are feeling big emotions. Or better tools for dealing with those big emotions.
- How to problem solve.

The ability to regulate emotion is a skill. And while it is a skill that comes easily to many of us, for many others it is a skill that must be taught, practiced, and learned. None of those opportunities for learning can occur for students who are not in school because they've been suspended or expelled.

We are grateful for Chair Richardson's leadership on this important issue and encourage support for HF 951.

Sincerely,
MULTICULTURAL AUTISM ACTION NETWORK
Fatima Molas, Chairperson
Delia Samuel
Rufo Jiru
Abyan Ali
Maren Christenson Hofer