



# Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

May 4, 2020

To: Members of the House Early Childhood Committee  
RE: HF 1785, DE 2

Dear Chair Pinto and Members,

We write as the Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition in support of HF 1785, DE 2, which would limit the use of dismissals for pre-kindergarten students. Solutions Not Suspensions is a coalition of students, families, community members, and organizations committed to changing policies, practices, and mindsets in order to end exclusionary discipline practices that disproportionately impact students of color and instead foster positive school climates for all students.

We strongly support limiting the use of dismissals for pre-kindergarten students. Unfortunately, Minnesota does not collect data on the use of suspensions and expulsions for pre-kindergarten students, but nationally, pre-kindergarten students are 3 times more likely to be suspended than K-12 students. And Black pre-kindergarten students are disproportionately suspended according to national data: they represented 18 percent of public preschool enrollment, but 48 percent of preschool students receiving multiple out of school suspensions.

Removing our youngest learners from the structured environments of pre-kindergarten programs is likely to make matters worse for children presenting with significant behaviors. Children who struggle to meet the behavioral expectations of school need more support, not to be removed from the environment. HF 1785, DE 2 is a reasonable solution because, while it does permit expulsions and exclusions in limited circumstances, it first requires schools to take steps to connect the student with appropriate resources to meet their needs. HF 1785, DE 2 also would prohibit suspensions of pre-kindergarten students, which is important to ensure that children who need support to participate appropriately in school environments can continue to access the structured school settings that are set up to teach them those skills.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's students. We encourage you to take this important step to ensure that Minnesota's youngest learners can continue to access the supports they need to grow and be successful in school.

Sincerely,  
Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

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