

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

March 24, 2023

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

Chair Youakim and Members of the Education Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities, we are writing to express support to House File 58, Representative Richardson's bill to end suspensions for students aged kindergarten through third grade.

The Coalition supports legislation that decreases the use of suspensions, exclusions, and expulsions and other disciplinary practices that neither meet the needs of students nor promote a positive school culture. Our students need to be in the classroom. Suspending our youngest students for behavioral concerns does not provide any benefits for the student, teacher, or school. Suspensions do not help address the underlying reason for any disruptive behavior. It is in these moments that our students need more access to school resources and connection to their school community to serve any unmet needs of the student. Removing a student from the school community inhibits a child's academic success and reduces their ability to form connections with their classmates. Additionally, suspensions are disproportionately used against students of color and students with disabilities. There are other tools available for our school system to utilize that are more inclusive for our students and our school community.

We strongly support HF 58 to remove the option for teachers to suspend, exclude, or expel our youngest learners.

Coalition for Children with Disabilities

Autism Society of Minnesota • The Arc Minnesota • Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota • Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center
Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance • Minnesota Council on Disability
Multicultural Autism Action Network • PACER Center
Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota • Proof Alliance