

Minnesota House of Representatives
Education Policy Committee
Chair – Rep. Richardson
February 24, 2021

My son who has nonverbal autism was suspended by teacher Kelly Morris and principal Jaysen Anderson on Thursday, May 3rd, 5:18pm in 2018. The teacher neglected to give him his communication device, disrupted his routine then called the principal and security on my kid.

I will never forget that day.



I never took him back. My son now goes to a charter school which has been simply wonderful. They understand he has a disability and does not comprehend suspension nor cause/affect.

Madam Chair and Members, many thanks for the opportunity to testify today. Reading this legislation feels like déjà vu. Gov Walz and Minnesota Department of Education have been saying school districts use non-exclusionary methods before kicking a child from his or her educational environment.

The problem is I am not sure if they believe this and really want it. Here is why: I have been around the advocacy block for over a decade. And I know that what the governor wants the governor gets because he holds the ever-powerful veto pen. In other words, governors can negotiate what is important to them and their constituents pass and become law, but only if they want it.

However, this language (non-exclusionary) in section 7, subd 12, lines 21.24 to 22.4 gives parents like me the illusion but not the tangible action our kids need. For example, if Gov Walz really wants this then he should have made sure Education Minnesota supports this on the record. His office would have also

made sure they communicated with the principals and administrators to get their support. In the end, perhaps no-one would get everything they want, but everyone would get something they need.

If I were a betting person, I would bet this language will be scrapped during the conference committee and Governor and the state education department will blame the other side thereby guaranteeing minority votes while doing nothing to ensure success of our kids was accomplished.

I know I am sure I have irritated some of the politicians here, but please put yourself in my shoes, put yourself in so many students and family's shoes. Imagine testifying for the same bill knowing while the seeds appear to be good, it will never produce fruitful fruits.

Idil – Frustrated Somali Autism Mom