Good Afternoon Madame Chair Youakim and committee members,

My name is Susan Montgomery. Im a parent Advocate and here today on behalf of my son Taye. He is currently doing well as an 8th grader in Roseville Area Middle School. As a student who identifies black and has an IEP, he has been through some negative experiences with schools including the one he is at now. This is the best worse school and the longest he has ever attended.

Although he hasn’t been suspended as much this year, he has also been removed, pushed out or disciplined for advocating or even defending himself. Currently on his 17th school or related program, he has been a victim of educational neglect, system abuse, police brutality, discrimination, harsh discipline and other violence while attending local schools. I believe if he was given the same chances and choices as other students he would of been more stable and successful in his journey. These issues have contributed to huge opportunity and educational gaps which is long lasting trauma to kids like mine. Our kids want and need to be in school. We have racial disparities and implicit bias in our education system, along with failing schools. We are not often given information or choices to better our students either. Finding resources, support services or alternatives is extremely difficult so our kids continue to fall through the cracks. When our kids get suspended the schools are quick to remember their policy and procedures for punishment, they are taken into admin office with out parents, forced to confess to something they may have not done and have to sign a statement. They may or may not receive the fair pupil act pamphlet on the way out. There is no appeal process either. This is a direct set up to the school to prison pipeline. When our children are bullied or even do something well, the same treatment is not given. Your continued support is needed to make the much needed changes.

Thank you,

Susan Montgomery