



March 3, 2021

**To: Members of the House Education Policy Committee**  
**RE: House File 951**

Dear Chair Richardson and Committee Members,

Thank you so much for your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's students! We write to share our support for House File 951.

The Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) and the Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) are statewide projects of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. MDLC serves as the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for Minnesota, and, along with every other state and territory, is the largest network of legally based advocacy services for people with disabilities in the United States. MDLC provides free legal services to children and adults with disabilities. LSAP is the advocacy arm of Legal Aid and has provided legislative and administrative advocacy on behalf of Legal Aid's clients and all low-income Minnesotans since 1977.

We hope you will support House File 951, which would limit dismissals for Minnesota students in grades kindergarten through third grade. Legal Aid's mission is to advocate for the legal rights of our clients so they may enjoy safe, healthy, and independent lives in strong communities, including and especially in school. Many of our clients are young children, particularly Black, Indigenous, and students of color, and students who have disabilities, who are too often excluded from school when what they truly need is support. Legal Aid is part of the Solutions Not Suspensions coalition, which has been working for years to end racial disparities in student discipline. Limiting the use of suspensions for these young learners would be a tremendous move to ensure that young Minnesotans experience belonging and success in school environments during their foundational years in school. We support this important effort and are grateful for the leadership of Chair Richardson in advancing this key issue on behalf of Minnesota's young learners.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's students and for considering this important step to address racial disparities in Minnesota's schools and to ensure that Minnesotans have full access to school from a young age.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MH", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Maren Hulden  
Staff Attorney