



March 30, 2022

To: Members of the House Education Finance Committee

RE: House File 4233

Dear Chair Davnie and Committee Members,

The Minnesota Disability Law Center (MDLC) and the Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP) 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 write to share our support for House File 4233, which would help to ensure that teachers who are responsible for serving students receiving special education services get preparation time to complete due process requirements. Thank you to Representative Edelson for your leadership on this important topic!

Many of our clients are students who have disabilities who are struggling in school – that is why their families contact our office. For all students who have disabilities, and especially for students who are experiencing challenges at school, the communication documents prepared by school staff are a critical way that parents are informed about how their student is doing. These documents are also critical for parent participation in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. These documents include summaries of the student's current levels of achievement, progress towards goals and objectives, and evaluations that include critical information about the student. All of this documentation informs the IEP team and the IEP. It takes time to gather and prepare this information, and families appreciate and depend on these important communication tools.

We are very supportive of ensuring that teachers are supported and have time to work on these important communication tools. When teachers don't have time to do so, families can feel disconnected or even lose trust in the rest of the IEP team, particularly if their child is struggling. Thank you Representative Edelson for bringing this bill to address this important issue!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maren Hulden", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Maren Hulden
Staff Attorney