



MINNESOTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION

Serving Elementary and Middle-Level Principals

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Representative Cheryl Youakim, Chair
House Education Finance Committee
443 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Ron Kresha, Republican Lead
House Education Finance Committee
207 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Ruth Richardson
403 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Concerns on HF 58

Dear Representatives Youakim, Kresha and Richardson:

Minnesota's elementary principals have the responsibility for the education and safety of our youngest students. We are deeply concerned that HF 58 may have unintended consequences toward the completion of those goals.

The current language in the bill prohibits all suspensions in grades K-3. For reasons that are unclear to us, the bill only authorizes expulsions and exclusions. Districts rarely, if ever use expulsion or exclusion of students at this level. Suspension, however, is a different matter. Often students need to be out of school for a day or more for safety reasons, both for the involved student and for other students. This time is often used to ready both the student and the classroom for the students' reentry into the appropriate educational setting.

We need to reach some middle ground on the use of K-3 suspensions in Minnesota schools.

MESPA supports reasonable limitation on the use of suspensions. MESPA also supports the use of nonexclusionary discipline. Funding initiatives in this area are welcomed and we support the funding provisions in the bill. All schools are working toward the elimination of racial disparities in suspensions and this funding assists in those efforts.

These issues are important to all of our communities. We hope in the weeks ahead the result can benefit all students and all of our school communities. We would hope that we can continue to discuss reasonable alternatives to the language of the bill.

Jon Millerhagen
MESPA Executive Director

Jason Luksik
MESPA President