

COALITION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

March 17, 2022

Education Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Richardson and Members of the Education Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Coalition for Children with Disabilities, we are writing to express support to House File 3402, Representative Edelson's bill to end withholding recess as discipline measure.

As advocates we hear countless stories from children who have recess withheld as a form of punishment. The science clearly shows us that withholding recess does not improve a child's behavior. On the contrary, we know that recess is an essential part of a child's day and that children need the opportunity to reset their bodies and their minds. Recess also provides an essential opportunity to develop social skills in less structured environments. Studies by the American Academy of Pediatrics have also demonstrated students are more attentive and better able to perform school tasks following recess.

We are concerned that recess detentions, like most forms of discipline, are disproportionately used on children with disabilities, children from communities of color, and especially children with intersecting identities. We frequently hear stories from parents where recess is withheld when a student is unable to complete work on time due to executive function issues or may be unable to sit still or remain quiet due to attention deficits. Withholding recess in these cases is counterproductive and has the effect of punishing a child for their disability.

We strongly support HF 3402 and believe that withholding recess as a form of punishment is a practice which should come to an end.

Coalition for Children with Disabilities

The Arc Minnesota • Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota
Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid/Minnesota Disability Law Center • Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance
PACER Center • Prader-Willi Syndrome Association of Minnesota
Proof Alliance