



January 24, 2023

Re: HF271, Exclusion from recess prohibited as student discipline

Dear Chair Pryor and members of the committee,

We are writing in support of HF271. We believe this is an important step toward improving our state's approach to school discipline. Relying on exclusionary practices simply isn't working; it's pushing students out of the classroom and contributing to our state's persistent opportunity gaps. We know exclusionary discipline disproportionately impacts students of color and students with disabilities, often for non-violent and subjective offenses.

And in this case, it takes students away from a part of the day that can help them build important social emotional skills, get essential physical activity, outdoor time, and rest, and strengthen peer relationships. This bill would provide stronger guardrails to end the use of recess removal as a punishment, promoting instead practices that are more likely to help students grow and develop for the long-term.

Withholding recess is ultimately counterproductive. In many cases it occurs when students haven't completed work or have demonstrated behaviors in class that could actually be improved by ensuring access to recess. The American Academy of Pediatrics has weighed in on the benefits of recess for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, and their research has also found that students are more attentive and better able to perform school tasks following recess—in fact, it can help students refocus.

We hope the committee will advance this bill as one important step toward keeping students engaged and supported in school. We thank Rep. Edelson for her leadership to make sure that all kids have access to opportunities to exercise and socialize during the school day.

Sincerely,

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