



January 18, 2023

To: Education Policy Committee Members

Re: Minnesota HF271/ SF183

Dear Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Proof Alliance, please accept this letter of support for Recess for All HF271/SF183.

I write to you as the Executive Director at Proof Alliance, the Minnesota-based nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) and supporting all individuals with an FASD. In Minnesota, 13.1% of pregnancies are exposed to alcohol. That means an estimated 8,755 babies are born with prenatal alcohol exposure each year in Minnesota.

Prenatal alcohol exposure has been linked with, among other things, memory issues, poor social skills, impulsivity, poor reasoning and judgement skills, and hearing and vision problems. Children with FASD can also experience lack of attention and emotional dysregulation. These characteristics are frequently labeled "poor behavior." When FASD characteristics present, caregivers of children with an FASD in our community report that recess is often withheld from their child. Unfortunately, withholding recess can exacerbate the situation, leading to further escalation in behaviors which can be difficult for teachers to manage.

Students with an FASD thrive in academic settings in which sensory breaks and recess are available on a consistent basis. Recess allows students to practice social skills and develop healthy peer relationships. This is critical for students with disabilities that often face isolation and school disruption. Recess can be a time to develop social skills and physically "reset," which assists in increased attention when the student returns to the classroom.

We urge the committee to support this vital legislation which would support all students - including those with an FASD - to access a full educational experience. The time is now to move forward this important policy. Thank you for your efforts and for your work on behalf of all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mollie O'Brien".

Mollie O'Brien
Executive Director
Proof Alliance