



Jan 20, 2023

MN House of Representatives Education Policy Committee

**Subject: HF 271**

Dear Chair Pryor and Members of the Education Policy Committee,

We are writing to share strong support for HF 271 which addresses withholding of recess as a form of punishment in schools. We believe this practice does not serve our teachers and staff well, and certainly does not serve our students. Specifically, we would like you to consider that:

- The research is very clear that recess is an essential part of a child's day and that children need the opportunity to reset their bodies and their minds.
- We know that recess also provides an essential opportunity to develop social skills in less structured environments.
- Studies by the American Academy of Pediatrics have demonstrated students are more attentive and better able to perform school tasks following recess.
- We are deeply 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.
- When a child is not meeting adult expectations, it is almost because they lack skills rather than willful disobedience. Our response should focus on teaching those kids the skills instead of punitive measures.

We believe that withholding recess as a form of punishment is an outdated idea which the science of child development clearly tells us does more harm than good. It is time to end this practice and focus on proactive forms of discipline that prioritize communication and connection over compliance and punishment.

Sincerely,

Multicultural Autism Action Network  
Fatima Molas, Board Chair  
Delia Samuel, Vice Chair  
Rufo Jiru, Board Member  
Maren Christenson Hofer, Executive Director