



Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

March 3, 2021

To: Members of the House Education Policy Committee

RE: In support of HF951

Dear Members,

Solutions Not Suspensions is a coalition of students, families, community members, and organizations committed to changing policies, practices, and mindsets in order to end exclusionary discipline practices that disproportionately impact students of color and instead foster positive school climates for all students.

We write in strong support of HF951, which extends the pre-kindergarten suspension ban and expulsion limitations to students in grades one through three. Research shows time and time again what common sense suggests: When students are not in school, they are not learning. Exclusionary discipline, on average, does not change student behavior in the short-term, but can have many long lasting negative impacts. For example, youth who are suspended or expelled are as much as ten times more likely to drop out of school, and are more likely to experience academic failure and grade retention, hold negative attitudes about school, and face incarceration than those who are not excluded.¹

Suspensions and expulsions are disproportionately impacting students of color. It is no wonder that Minnesota, home to some of the worst disparities in educational outcomes, also hosts some of the largest disparities in discipline rates between students of color and white students.

Our youngest students are learning the basics of self-regulation and can't make fully informed decisions about how they behave. Educators and administrators must teach them instead of kicking them out, which sends the message that school is not for them and exacerbates opportunity gaps.

¹ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>

We ask you to support HF951 to ensure our youngest students have access to learning environments and appropriate discipline interventions instead of relying on ineffective exclusionary practices.

Sincerely,

Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

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