

Minnesota House of Representatives  
Education Policy Committee  
Chair – Rep. Richardson  
March 3, 2021

*My son who has nonverbal autism was suspended by teacher Kelly Morris and principal Jaysen Anderson on Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5:18pm in 2018. The teacher neglected to give him his communication device, disrupted his routine then called the principal and security on my kid.*

*I will never forget that day.*



*I never took him back. My son now goes to a charter school which has been simply wonderful. They understand he has a disability and does not comprehend suspension nor cause/affect.*

---

Re: HF 951

Madam Chair and Members, many thanks for the opportunity to testify today.

You have all seen the data, read the research, heard students, parents, community leaders, and others tell you their stories. Suspension causes education gap. Suspension for children who do not even understand what the heck suspension is cruel and inhumane. Yet, it happens everyday in our schools to our children like mine. Suspension creates trauma and drama for everyone, not just for the student.

Many of you legislators are from districts with shameful education gap. None of your kids, nieces, nephews, or grandchildren are immune to this. If you are white and you are assuming your side of the education system is green, think again. America is browning up and your great-grand kids will be part of these statistics in the near future.

So now what? Who has the power to make a change? You all do. You represent all of us. You are obligated to protect the kids, train the teachers, and guide the districts. You are required to provide enough funding and resources for our children to learn and the adults to teach and support them.

One side saying – unfunded mandate, while the other side says – no money is taking the cowardly road. I hope you take the courageous lane, stand up for the children, do the right thing, and even if you

disagree, do not just vote no; come up with solutions.

I am going to end with quotes from four of my favorite history makers.

- Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, (MLK). Suspending kids with disabilities as well as brown and black students disproportionately is injustice.
- If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality, (Desmond Tutu). The teachers and administrators are the elephant while the children are the mouse. You must protect the children.
- Malcolm X said, "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today". When children are kicked from school, they lose their passport to a bright future. Please do not let that happen.
- Finally, Susan B Anthony was arrested for voting in 1872. Imagine that. She said, "Men, their rights, and nothing more; women, their rights, and nothing less". Black, brown and students with disabilities, their right to equal education, and nothing less.

As always, I thank you for your time.

Idil – Somali Autism Mom