

Minnesota Senate Education Finance & Policy Committee
Chair – Sen. Chamberlain
April 6th, 2021

Re: Education Omnibus bill

Dear Mr. Chair and Members, many thanks for the opportunity to testify today for my son and other students like him. Many of you are parents, uncles, aunts, etc., we all send our children to school to learn not just math and science, but also social and life skills.

Research has repeatedly told us that students of color and students with disabilities are disproportionately suspended. Many including my son who has nonverbal autism do not understand suspension; yet schools kick these kids out of their educational environment. We all want safe schools; we also want our children to learn and stay in school.

Administrators and teachers need support, training, and resources to teach, but they should also be held accountable for their actions. I ask that you add the suspension bill from Sen. Patricia Torres Ray and the governor's language of trying non-exclusionary methods first before suspending a kid to the senate portion of the education omnibus bill.

You have all heard the horrible and shameful record Minnesota has in education disparity. You also know that Minnesota is the only state in the country with a divided legislature. What the voters have told you is to work together in bipartisan manner that ensures everyone's voice is heard and valued. I ask you all to please keep our children in schools, increase teachers of color and protect students with disabilities for being punished for their disability.

As always, I thank you for your time and hope this legislative session produces more fruitful laws than before for all students.

Idil – Somali Autism Mom