



Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

April 6, 2021

To: Chair Chamberlain and Members of the Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Senate File 960

Dear Chair Chamberlain and Committee Members,

We write as the Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition regarding the Senate Education Finance and Policy Omnibus bill, the delete everything amendment to Senate File 960. 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 are extremely grateful for the inclusion of the following pieces in this bill:

- Limiting the use of K-3 Suspensions (Lines 21.9-21.11). This is a top priority for our coalition and we are so grateful that this is part of this bill. We believe that young students should be in the classroom, along with the support they need, and that removal makes things worse. This provision would be a major step forward for Minnesota.
- District Discipline Policy Review and Suspension (Lines 22.1-22.12). Our coalition believes in centering the voices of people most impacted and this provision would ensure that students and families have a voice in the policies districts use regarding discipline, including an opportunity to review aggregate data to consider how to best decrease racial disparities in discipline.
- Suspension Review (Lines 22.13-22.15). Students and families often find it frustrating that our current laws and policies do not guarantee an opportunity for them to raise concerns or request reconsideration of imposed suspensions. This would be a helpful step forward.

We note our concerns and opposition to the following provisions:

- Automatic Removal (59.16-59.19). Mandatory minimum days of classroom removal without due process is not helpful for students and will likely result in many missed learning opportunities without guaranteeing that students get the support they need to address unwanted behaviors.
- Student records (59.27-59.30). Students' actions should not follow them indefinitely. We believe that teachers and paraprofessionals should get information needed to

support students, but that it can be harmful to students to have a negative history inform new adults' views of them before they meet them.

- Language coded elsewhere (Lines 71.12-71.14). Requiring removal across the board under this language moves away from alternatives to exclusion and student-centered approaches. This also creates more potential for racial disparities in exclusion and access to learning.

Thank you so much for your leadership on behalf of Minnesota's students. We hope you will take seriously our views on this bill and would be glad to discuss any of them further.

Sincerely,

Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition

Coalition legislative contacts:

Josh Crosson (jcrosson@edalliesmn.org)

Shannon Mitchell (smitchell@e4e.org)

Maren Hulden (mhulden@mnlisap.org)