

Minnesota Education Policy & Finance Committee
Chair Sen. Chamberlain
February 24, 2021

My son who has nonverbal autism was suspended by teacher Kelly Morris and principal Jaysen Anderson on Thursday, May 3rd, 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.

Mr. Chair and Members,

Many thanks for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Idil Abdull, I am an autism mom & advocate. I would like to offer my support for the following legislations:

S.F 446, I fully support this bill. One of the reasons, Minnesota has a shameful education gap is that we do not have enough teachers of color. Black boys are less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to attend college if they have one black teacher in elementary school (Gershenson et al., 2017). Think about that for a minute – one black teacher can reduce drop out and increase attending college, thereby reducing education gap. I know 100% if my son’s teacher reflected him, he would not have been kicked out of his education environment. His current teacher, principal & director (Ahmed, Asha, and Maria) have been nothing short of superb, kind and welcoming to my son and our family.

Doesn’t every student deserve that?

<https://releases.jhu.edu/2017/04/05/with-just-one-black-teacher-black-students-more-likely-to-graduate/>

S.F 781, I cannot thank the author enough for having a spine to introduce this legislation. For far too long, schools kept incompetent and ineffective teachers simply because of their seniority. Teacher of the year, Qorsho Hassan still lost her job because of seniority based layoff. This practice must stop if we want to keep effective teachers in the classrooms and reduce education gap for kids. Please take a read below.

https://www.swnewsmedia.com/savage_pacer/news/education/award-winning-teachers-of-color-lost-to-budget-cuts-in-burnsville-call-for-introspection-policy/article_a83023c4-a222-5133-8426-5c7ed8aa4bfa.html

<https://www.aei.org/education/k-12-schooling/why-dont-teachers-get-fired-for-poor-teaching/>

<https://www.americanexperiment.org/2018/05/teachers-agree-teachers-union-makes-harder-fire-bad-teachers/>

S.F 784, Seriously, if there was a heaven in education; today's committee hearings would be Mozart music to my ears along with so many other parents. Based on data I received, my son's teacher who kicked him out of his educational environment did not have the training needed to help my son.

The idea of school districts must mentor and retain teachers including those from black and brown communities is – oh what is the word.....Fantastic. If this committee passes these amazing legislations and gets students and families to the finish-line this year, Minnesota will finally have an attainable chance to reduce education gap and decrease unnecessary suspensions. I thank the author for this bill from the bottom of my heart. And I urge all the members here to co-author all these remarkable and forward-thinking legislations. The time to act and support the students is now.

<https://sites.ed.gov/osers/2019/08/effective-personnel-for-all-attract-prepare-retain/>

With gratitude,

Idil – Somali Autism Mom