



October 19, 2017

The Honorable Jeremy Thiesfeldt
State Representative
State Capitol Room 16W
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Thiesfeldt,

Thank you for the opportunity to review proposed legislation related to disruptive students. The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) does not support this proposal in its current form. As you are likely aware, a similar law, "Removal of Students from Class" (118.164), has been active in Wisconsin since 1999. For years, our members have reported that directives under this law are not followed by building principals and other district administrators. Many times, students are immediately returned to class after being removed. This undermines teacher authority afforded in the law but, equally important, undermines their authority in the eyes of *all* of their students: the disruptor and those whose instruction was interrupted.

Additionally, we find this proposal:

- Infringes on student privacy rights;
- Focuses heavily on out-of-school incidents;
- Does not clearly define "taken into custody";
- Potentially places teachers and administrators at odds with serious consequences over student discipline;
- Provides no mechanism for teacher professional development to defuse or deescalate in-school incidents;
- Places little to no burden on parents or caregivers;
- Does not address the handling of students with special education needs;
- Will disproportionately affect students of color;
- Includes additional, unnecessary reporting categories for suspension and expulsions;
- Does not attempt to address the root causes of student disruption and violence.

The need for mental health services for students was recognized by a small allocation in the passage of the State budget in September. The best way to help students in need is to provide them with programs and counseling that keep them involved in their school community. The best way to protect teachers from violence is to enforce current law and provide effective strategies and resources for dealing with violent and disruptive children.

Sincerely,

Robert Baxter,
WEAC Executive Director

Ron Martin, President
Bob Baxter, Executive Director