

Senator Schodorf and Education Committee Members:

I am concerned about seclusion and restraint because I do not currently see any accountability for its use. My child is non-verbal; therefore, if the current guidelines are not followed, he would not be able to tell me if he were harmed in any way or communicate with me about how that affects him emotionally. I do not understand why my school is reluctant to follow the current guidelines since these protect children. My school refused to attach the guidelines to my child's IEP which indicated to me that they were unwilling to follow the guidelines.

I would get reports daily (sometimes several times per day), which lasted over several months, that my child had received seclusion and restraint with each occurrence. The seclusion lasted anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour. On one occasion he came home with a mark (a rug burn the size of a tennis ball on his back) from being put in a restraint. The school would not listen to my concerns until I was able to get assistance from Families Together in advocating for an alternative plan for my son. At that time, he was missing a lot of educational benefit due to seclusion and restraint. Now, that we have a better plan in place, he is with grade level peers for more than half the day and doing well.

I support House Bill 2444. Please feel free to contact me if you would like further information about my child and family's experience with seclusion and restraint.

Sincerely,

Chonita Nigus

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