



*Lighting The Way  
To Excellence In  
School Governance*

The Honorable Sean Casten  
U.S. House of Representatives  
429 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-1306

PLEASE REPLY TO:

☐ 2921 Baker Drive  
Springfield, Illinois  
62703-5929  
217/528-9688  
Fax: 217/528-2831

Dear Congressman Casten:

On behalf of the Illinois Association of School Boards, and our nearly 6,000 locally elected school board members, we are writing to you to share some concerns and thoughts regarding the letter you signed addressed to the U.S. Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, on seclusion and restraint practices in schools.

☐ One Imperial Place  
1 East 22nd Street  
Suite 20  
Lombard, Illinois  
60148-6120  
630/629-3776  
Fax: 630/629-3940

We condemn the unlawful seclusion or restraint of students. Isolated time out and physical restraint have been and continue to be prohibited as a form of punishment. It is disappointing and heartbreaking to learn of situations that did not meet these strict standards. Bear in mind, however, that the vast majority of Illinois schools do follow the law and have been appropriately implementing time out and physical restraint.

OFFICERS  
Thomas Neeley  
*President*

There are times that seclusion may be necessary to ensure the safety of an individual student or the safety of other students and staff. This must be done with the safety of all involved in mind and in accordance with the law, administrative rules, and board policies. Proper training, adequate resources, and oversight is necessary to ensure the safety of the student in crisis, and of others within the school.

Simon Kampwerth Jr.  
*Vice President*

Joanne Osmond  
*Immediate Past President*

If any regulations are proposed where the intent is to prohibit isolating a student, without any supervision from an adult, we would likely support this change. However, if the intent is to prohibit seclusion in any form, including “time-out,” that removes a useful de-escalation tool for students in crisis as well as educators seeking to ensure the safety of others. “Time-out” areas have also been cited as used when a child is at risk of fleeing school, risking their own safety or the safety of others.

Linda Eades  
*Treasurer*

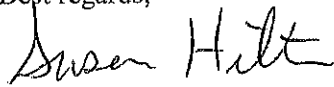
Thomas E. Bertrand, Ph.D.  
*Executive Director*

We would also be concerned with any proposals requiring an adult to remain in a room with a student in crisis. It is imperative that we honor the professional judgement of the members of a student’s service delivery team. Additionally, school leaders have noted their concerns for the safety of staff and how this requirement will exacerbate an educator shortage under these working conditions. School leaders have also noted that there are situations when students do not have the opportunity to regroup in private, leading at times to the students becoming more agitated and resorting to self-injury to express their frustration.

Our Office of General Counsel, in conjunction with the Illinois Council of School Attorneys, has extensively analyzed this issue. As a result of their work, the Illinois State Board of Education and sponsors of State legislation addressing this issue are considering changes based on these points.

We appreciate your consideration of this information and we offer our organization as a resource on this and any other education issue you come across. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Hilton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and 'H'.

Susan Hilton

Director of Governmental Relations