

Subject: Please Support H7526 – Classroom Safety

Dear Chair McNamara and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Lisa-Marie Colantonio, and I am a Grade 1 Teacher in Cranston Public Schools. I am writing to ask for your support of **H7526**, legislation that would give teachers the authority to remove students from classrooms when behavior creates safety risks or major disruptions.

As educators, we are committed to making our schools warm, welcoming, and safe environments where all students can learn and thrive. We want every child to come to school excited, prepared, and confident in their safety. Every student deserves the opportunity to learn in a secure and supportive environment.

As Teachers, we work diligently to plan engaging lessons, differentiate instruction, and incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL) into our classrooms. However, the reality we face is often very different. Increasingly, students with significant emotional and behavioral needs are placed in general education classrooms without sufficient support. These situations can be extremely challenging to manage while teaching a class of 22 young learners.

At times, classrooms are disrupted by behaviors such as screaming, inappropriate language, threats toward others, throwing objects, and destroying classroom materials. These incidents can occur while instruction is taking place, significantly impacting both teaching and learning. Although a student may be removed temporarily, they often return shortly after, and the cycle continues.

As a teacher with over 30 years of experience, I am deeply concerned about both the safety and the educational progress of all students. We must ask ourselves: How much disruption to learning is acceptable? How much instructional time can students afford to lose? How safe should students be expected to feel in their classrooms?

The answer is clear. No student should lose access to their education because of another student's behavior. No child should come to school feeling unsafe or anxious about what the day may bring.

I respectfully urge you to support School Safety Bill H7526. This legislation is an important step toward providing educators with clear authority to address these challenges and maintain a safe, productive learning environment for all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your commitment to the students and educators in our schools.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Lisa-Marie Colantonio

Grade 1 Teacher

Garden City Elementary School

