

Dear Seclusion Working Group,

My name is Val Rae Boe. I am writing to emphasize my concerns and recommendations regarding proposals under consideration. My commitment to students in setting IV has provided me with over 20 years of rewarding service as a special education teacher, Principal, director of Special Education, and, currently, Superintendent.

At 916, we prioritize prevention, de-escalation, and collaboration with parents and guardians. Seclusion is used rarely and only when less restrictive interventions have failed and when physical restraint would be more traumatic or harmful, particularly for students with a history of significant trauma.

For Setting IV special education programs, an abrupt ban creates a significant risk. Removing seclusion without first ensuring statewide readiness for effective alternatives leaves programs without adequate emergency response options, increasing the likelihood of physical restraints, law enforcement involvement, reduced instructional time, and harm to both students and staff.

An alternative approach supported by special education colleagues and aligned with recommendations from NAMI calls for preserving seclusion as an emergency tool of last resort while the state invests in evidence-based alternatives, training, and technical assistance. Under this model, seclusion would be phased out when suitable alternatives are identified, fully funded, and implemented with fidelity statewide. Programs such as Ukeru have been identified as promising, but require sustained resources and professional learning to be effective.

Eliminating seclusion without first ensuring that alternatives are fully resourced and operational will have serious unintended consequences. I urge you to support a phased, well-funded transition that prioritizes safety, mandates state investment in alternatives, and allows districts the time and support necessary to implement change responsibly.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued commitment to Minnesota's most vulnerable students.

Dr. Val Rae Boe
Superintendent
Northeast Metro 916 Intermediate School District
2540 County Rd F East | White Bear Lake, MN 55110
vboe@916schools.org