

October 20, 2021-

To: Members of the Tennessee General Assembly

**RE: Offer of Support for Special Session on COVID-19**

My name is Kristin McKinney and I am the mom of two girls that attend Williamson County Schools. My children have now spent **EIGHT DAYS** in In School Suspension (ISS) without any instruction, socialization, or contact with other students, and will be remaining in ISS indefinitely.

**If I were to isolate my children for 7 hours a days, keep them in silence, and allow only scheduled bathroom breaks, Child Services would most certainly be at my door.** HOWEVER, Williamson County schools is enforcing this criminal child abuse and neglect and getting away with it. This cannot continue and your leadership is the key to protecting not only my children, but the hundreds of thousands of other children in Tennessee Public Schools. I want to keep you updated on our situation as you consider the actions and desired outcomes of your special session:

**A “manifestation meeting” has been called for this week regarding one of my children who has a 504 accommodation for an OCD diagnosis.** The nature of the manifestation meeting is determine if her reason for being in ISS is a direct result of her diagnosis or not. As I understand it, this is procedural in nature. However, both of my children have strong academic records and no history of behavioral or disciplinary issues. My child’s 504 accommodation is academic in nature only and the entirety of the 504 plan is that she be allowed to listen to music in ear buds while in the classroom. The ISS sentence is clearly NOT a result of any diagnosis and it is puzzling to think that anyone would attempt to make it the “fault” of a diagnosis.

That said, if they determine the ISS is NOT a manifestation of her diagnosis, which will most certainly be the outcome, there is the possibility for the school to move that my child(ren) be expelled or transferred to an Alternative Learning Center (ALC). This is unconscionable. While this outcome has not yet been placed on the table, we need to ensure it is never part of the conversation.

I want to THANK YOU for your leadership in calling a special session of the General Assembly. Thank you for giving us hope that relief is in sight. As we approach October 27, the start of the special session, I offer my support and encouragement on some key points:

- 1) ***PROTECT OUR KIDS! Ban forced masking/mask mandates in school***
- 2) *Allow parents to hold school board members accountable by allowing board members to be recalled via petition*
- 3) *Make School Board elections partisan. School board members must be accountable for their political records and affiliations*
- 4) *Limit State of Emergency authority granted to the Governor*
- 5) *Remove broad authority of county health officials*

You have my full support in protecting the rights of parents and our precious children. My children remain in ISS until mask mandates are explicitly banned in our schools – you have the authority and obligation to do this and I stand with you in ensuring this protection is written into law.

Lastly, my children and I are at your disposal leading up to and during your special session. **I extend an offer for myself and/or my children to appear in person during your session** to share our story or testify in whatever means are necessary to help you accomplish this important work.

For our Children –



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