

Bellevue Special Needs PTA Statement on Restraint and Isolation policy

By: Bellevue Special Needs PTA Board of Directors

June 5, 2014

The Bellevue School District is currently considering a new policy on the use of restraint and isolation for students with IEP's and 504 plans. The Bellevue Special Needs PTA has suggested several changes to the draft policy that are intended to remove ambiguity in the proposed language and better align the text with the intent of existing state laws.

In addition, we have asked the school board to consider whether some of the "restraint devices" (per RCW28A.600.485(1)(c)) allowed to be used under state law are consistent with the principles of parents and staff across the school district. The use of metal handcuffs, pepper spray, batons, and tasers by authorized and trained district staff on misbehaving students, while allowed under state law, may not align with parent expectations. While the use of these particular restraint devices is extremely rare, the policy, as written, will allow them to be used when a student exhibits "unpredicted, spontaneous behavior". Vague standards can be an invitation for misuse.

In terms of more general restraint and isolation of students with IEP's and 504 plans, we have significant concerns about the frequency with which restraint and isolation are used, instead of implementing preventative strategies and positive behavioral interventions designed to de-escalate situations that may lead to more aggressive behaviors.

The Bellevue Special Needs PTA will continue its collaboration with the Bellevue School Board and District Staff on this critically important policy so all students can have a safe learning environment.

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