

Written Testimony of

**Jill Portera
Plymouth Educator**

Before the Education Committee

HB 6557 AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.

March 8, 2021

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Jill Portera and I'm a classroom teacher in the Plymouth Public Schools. In our district, we have one of the lowest expenditure per pupil with one of the higher levels of low socio-economic status. Our resources are extremely limited. The acceptable counselor, social worker and school psychologist ratios are ridiculous. Every day, all day long I have students in my class who are in desperate need of emotional support. Our school counselors are overwhelmed and bombarded with these students. These guidance counselors are supposed to support the entire population, yet their time and energy is spent on the same students over and over. How is this fair to students who really need help with grades, who are having issues at home, or need guidance on where to attend the next level education. Our identified SEL students are also at a loss with only 1 teacher for an overwhelming amount of students. At one point, we had to stop accepting students into the SEL program because we just don't have the resources. Instead, we are told to just ignore distracting, disruptive and unsafe behaviors because we don't have anywhere to send them! I'm tired of having to babysit these students (because we all know that's what it boils down to) and fight for the kids who are in my class and ready to learn. At this point in my career, I'm not teaching..I'm managing classroom behaviors so no one blows up. This is wrong. There needs to be discipline for those students who need it and emotional support for those need it.