

March 4, 2026

HB1046 School and School Sponsored Activities – Report of Suspected Abuse or Neglect – Parental Notification

Dear Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing in strong support of legislation requiring schools to notify a parent, guardian, or caretaker within 24 hours when a mandated reporter submits a report of suspected abuse or neglect occurring at a school or during a school-sponsored activity—unless the parent or guardian is the subject of the report.

As a special needs mother to two children with disabilities, this issue is deeply personal and profoundly important to me. Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable members of our school communities. Many of them have communication challenges, medical complexities, or sensory differences that make it difficult—if not impossible—for them to fully articulate when something is wrong. Because of this, parents and caregivers are often the only consistent advocates who can recognize subtle changes in behavior, physical condition, or emotional well-being.

When suspected abuse involves a school staff member, it is absolutely critical that parents, guardians, or caretakers are notified immediately—ideally before 24 hours have passed. Prompt notification allows families to seek necessary medical care, document injuries, and ensure the child's immediate safety. Delays in notification can result in untreated injuries, missed medical findings, and lost evidence. If a child has sustained harm that is not discovered until days later, it not only jeopardizes their physical health but also complicates investigations and accountability.

It is completely unacceptable for parents or guardians to learn days later that a report of suspected abuse was made involving their child. Such delays place children at continued risk and undermine trust between families and schools. Transparency is not optional when it comes to child safety—it is essential.

This bill is not about interfering with investigations. It is about protecting children and ensuring that families are informed partners in safeguarding their well-being. Immediate notification strengthens accountability, promotes timely medical evaluation, and reinforces a culture where student safety is the highest priority.

For children with disabilities especially, time matters. Early intervention can mean the difference between a minor injury and a serious complication, between a supported child and a traumatized one. Parents must be empowered with information as soon as possible so they can act in their child's best interest.

I respectfully urge you to support and pass this legislation. Our children—particularly those who are most vulnerable—deserve nothing less than immediate protection, transparency, and advocacy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Caitlyn Battoe