The Arc Wisconsin: Celebrates new protections for students with disabilities

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 3, 2020

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Madison, WI – The Arc Wisconsin congratulates families and students with disabilities for a
hard-won victory as Governor Evers signed the new seclusion and restraint bill into law today.

Governor Evers, bi-partisan legislators, including bill authors Senator Olsen and Representative Quinn deserve specific recognition for agreeing that Wisconsin's current law
regulating the harmful practices of seclusion and restraint needed updating.

The Arc Wisconsin advocated alongside other organizations for the introduction of this bill
that will now require that parents be directly notified when their son or daughter has been
restrained or secluded at school.

Disability advocates have long been concerned about under-reporting of seclusion and
restraint incidents in Wisconsin. Under state law physical restraint means a restriction that
immobilizes or reduces the ability of a pupil to freely move his or her torso, arms, legs, or
head; Seclusion means the involuntary confinement of a pupil, apart from other pupils, in a
room or area from which the pupil is physically prevented from leaving.

In a 2015 open records request survey by Disability Rights Wisconsin, about one-fifth of all
Wisconsin districts reported no incidents of seclusion and restraint. Disability Rights
Wisconsin found a total of 20,131 incidents of seclusion and restraint reported across
Wisconsin schools for the 2013-14 academic year. About 80% of incidents are
occurring with children with disabilities. Parents indicated statewide they were not told about these
incidents and that their children experienced trauma.

The new law will also require state level reporting of seclusion and restraint, enhances
training for staff, will include the actions of law enforcement in reporting and will update
other definitions.