

DOJ Agreement Signals Higher Expectations for School Seclusion and Restraint Practices Under the ADA

DOJ enforcement highlights rising ADA expectations for school seclusion and restraint practices—and what families should document now.

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI, UNITED STATES, December 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A recent U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) settlement with a Michigan intermediate school district underscores how federal civil-rights enforcement can directly reshape day-to-day school behavior practices, especially where seclusion and restraint are used with students with disabilities.

According to the DOJ, the agreement addresses discriminatory use of seclusion and restraint against students with disabilities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and requires systemic reforms to end seclusion and improve safeguards around restraint.



Families should not have to guess whether their child's school is using safe, lawful behavior supports"

Keith Altman

[You can read about it here.](#)

Why this matters for families and schools: Seclusion and restraint can become compliance flashpoints because they sit at the intersection of disability rights, behavior supports, documentation, staff training, and parent notification. When the underlying interventions

are not aligned with appropriate supports, schools can face significant risk—both for student harm and for civil-rights exposure.

DOJ enforcement actions like this one can also become a roadmap for other districts: policies, training, reporting, and compensatory supports are not merely "best practices"—they are often



A DOJ agreement involving a Michigan school district highlights how seclusion and restraint practices are increasingly scrutinized under the ADA, with documentation and safeguards at the center.

the first items federal investigators will examine.

Key compliance takeaways:

The DOJ press release describes reforms that include ending the use of seclusion, reforming restraint practices, and improving special education services. For districts and schools, the operational lesson is straightforward: behavior response systems must be built around proactive supports, not crisis-driven isolation.

For parents and guardians, the lesson is equally practical: documentation (incident reports, timelines, notices, and related service records) becomes the backbone of any effective accountability conversation, whether the goal is safety, services, or systemic change.

“Families should not have to guess whether their child’s school is using safe, lawful behavior supports,” said [Keith Altman](#), Founder and Managing Partner of [K Altman Law](#). “When seclusion or restraint enters the picture, the focus should shift immediately to documented safeguards, appropriate supports, and a clear compliance record, not informal assurances.”

What should families and students do now?

- If seclusion or restraint is used, request the written incident report and any parent notification required by district policy or state law.
- Ask for the student’s current behavior supports (e.g., BIP/IEP components, de-escalation plan) and whether changes are being considered based on data.
- If your child has an IEP or 504 plan, ask how the school is ensuring access to FAPE while also addressing behavioral needs.
- Keep a contemporaneous log (dates, staff names, communications, impacts on attendance and services).

About K Altman Law:

K Altman Law is a national education law firm that advises and represents students, families, and educators in matters involving student discipline, special education (IEP/504), Title IX process integrity, and related civil-rights issues. The firm works with clients across the United States, with matters often involving both educational policy compliance and high-stakes decision-making by schools, districts, and universities.

Disclaimer:



Keith Altman Founder of K Altman Law

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