

A Teacher CANNOT...

...tape a student to a chair. That's the lesson an Illinois man is learning after being sentenced to probation following an incident in a McHenry County classroom. Sorry Derek – this is really a story for your blog... you have my permission to steal it. Hopefully they cover not taping kids, especially special education students, to their chairs in Substitute Teaching 101? Here is the full story:

Substitute Teacher Gets Probation For Taping Unruly Student To Seat

A substitute teacher who taped a pair of rambunctious 8-year-old special education students to their seats was spared forced confinement himself Tuesday when a judge sentenced him to probation instead of prison on a pair of felony convictions.

Matthew Konetski, 32, of South Beloit, Ill., must serve two years probation, pay a \$1,500 fine and perform 80 hours public service under the sentence handed down by a McHenry County judge.

The sentence comes about six weeks after a jury found Konetski guilty of aggravated battery and unlawful restraint for a March 2006 incident in which he taped one of his students at Harvard's Jefferson Elementary School to his seat, then put tape over the boy's mouth when the boy would not sit still.

The taping, according to trial testimony, lasted between two and five minutes.

Authorities initially charged Konetski with doing the same to a second student, but prosecutors opted not to go to trial on those allegations.

The mother of the boy whose case did go to trial said she is

satisfied with the sentence.

"I never wanted to put him in jail," she said. "I just wanted him held accountable."

In a letter to the court, the mother said her son, who's been diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder, began acting out after the incident. At one point, she writes, the boy was hospitalized for more than 30 days.

"(He), 26 months later, still wakes up screaming 'Let me go!,' " the letter states.

During his trial, Konetski testified that he taped the boys as a last resort when they would not stop getting up in class. Although he was a first-year substitute with no special education training, Konetski was left alone with the special education students without two aides normally assigned to the class.

He apologized Tuesday for his actions, saying he never intended to harm or scare the boys.

"I was just trying to come up with a way to deal with a situation I didn't know how to deal with," he said.

County prosecutors had asked for a jail sentence along with the probation term, saying a stiff sentence would send a message to the public.

"(The victim) experienced being confined in his chair that day by this defendant," Assistant McHenry County State's Attorney Sharyl Eisenstein said. "We feel that he, in turn, should be confined in the McHenry County jail."

Konetski will not have to register as a sex offender because, Judge Sharon Prather ruled, there is no evidence his actions were sexually motivated.