

## **RE In Support of H7721- An Act Relating to Education -- Children with Disabilities**

Chairman McNamara, Vice Chairs Noret and Kislak, and members of the House Education Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for H 7721- An Act Relating To Education -- Children With Disabilities and our thanks to Representative Kislak and her esteemed co-sponsors for their introduction of this bill, which would outline the steps and criteria for local education agencies to obtain written permission from parents prior to conducting assessments, reassessments, making initial placements, altering placements, or adjusting the individual education programs (IEP) for students enrolled in special education services.

The Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF) is comprised of forty-three member organizations who provide and advocate for family strengthening and support resources, comprehensive child and family services including: behavioral health, special education, juvenile justice, domestic violence, sexual assault, and healthcare services; foster care and residential treatment programs, and a strong and effective human services workforce.

House Bill 7721 recognizes the essential role of parents in the IEP process by reinstating the requirement for parental consent before changes to an IEP can be implemented. This ensures that parents are not only informed but are also empowered to make decisions that directly impact their children's education.

Parental involvement in the development and implementation of an IEP is a cornerstone of effective special education practices. Parents are uniquely positioned to provide valuable insights into their child's strengths, needs, preferences, and goals. They are the experts on their child, possessing a wealth of knowledge about their child's abilities and challenges that cannot be replicated by anyone else. Research has shown family involvement in schools leads to favorable student results, such as enhanced child and student accomplishments, reduced disciplinary concerns, improved interactions between parents and teachers, as well as between teachers and students, and an overall better school atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

This bill affirms our state's commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships between parents and educators, recognizing that when parents are involved in developing their children's educational plans, the outcomes are more positive, and the impact is enduring.

We thank you for your consideration and urge your support of H7721.

---

<sup>1</sup><https://sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tanja Kubas-Meyer". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Tanja Kubas-Meyer  
Executive Director