

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara
Chair, House Committee on Education
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of H-7721

Chair McNamara:

My name is Tracey Pollock Tiberio and I am testifying in support of H-7721, a bill that would strengthen parental rights in the IEP process. The way things are currently, an IEP can be changed without parent consent. In addition to this, when changes are made, whether to a student's placement or based on evaluations, the parent doesn't get to review evaluations prior to the meeting or visit the new educational setting.

This bill would:

- Require schools to share evaluation reports and other important documents with parents in advance of IEP meetings;
- Give parents the right to observe placements proposed for their children; and
- Restores the requirement to obtain written parental consent before implementing changes to a student's IEP.

I am supporting this bill because as a parent because we are an equal part of the IEP team. Being given the IEP the day of the IEP meeting is unacceptable. As an equal part of the IEP team it does not support parents as an equal team member.

1. The most important person in the IEP team is the child's parent, parents or guardian.
2. The IEP was established by IDEA which states the IEP is a written document developed by the IEP team. As stated, parents are the most important part of the IEP team therefore parents should be a part of the IEP implementation.
3. As parents we are not given the IEP in advance which puts us at a disadvantage, and this is not being an equal part of the IEP team.
4. We are our child's parent, advocate, and caregiver.

In my experience, the IEP process is limited to a certain time. Documents are not shared in advance. I had to state many times that as a parent, I am the most important person in the IEP team. As a parent, I know my child best. Changes to an IEP should not be done without written consent. We should have the right to observe placements which has not been part of the IEP process. The team writes the IEP and shares it with the parent at the IEP meeting. This is not acceptable. It denies our right as an equal part of the team. We as parents deserve the right to have access to documents, evaluations, reports all in advance so we have time to review.

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Furthermore, we need to be part of the process before the IEP is written. As parents, we are currently at a disadvantage in all aspects of the IEP implementation. changes need to be made in order to successfully be a part of the team and be the advocate for our child or children with special needs.

I urge you to vote in favor of bill H-7721.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of H-7721.

Sincerely,
Tracey Pollock Tiberio
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