

To whom it may concern:

My name is Blessing Offor. I am a 22 year old professional musician (singer/songwriter and recording artist) currently residing in New York City. I am privileged to be able to speak on behalf of BESB as a direct beneficiary of the wonderful services they provide on a daily basis.

I have been a BESB student from first grade through my graduation from Hamden High School in 2007, and into my college experience at Belmont University in Nashville, TN that fall. I am sure you would agree that no individual who desires to benefit from the wonderful educational system in Connecticut should be kept from doing so. I am sure you can also imagine how inherently difficult being a student can be when you have the added difficulty of a visual impairment to contend with. This letter is simply to ask you to consider that without an organization like BESB, the ability for students such as myself to access a high-quality education would severely be hampered.

As an elementary school student, BESB taught me the skills that I needed to keep on pace with my classmates, and with the years of experience that it has, BESB was able to foresee my future needs and plan ahead. As a high school student, BESB prepared me for post-secondary education. BESB taught me self-advocacy skills, which have proven to be invaluable even today. I was given the skills I needed to deal with technology, bureaucracy, and other such facets of not only being an adult, but being an adult with special needs. The beauty of a system like BESB is that it allows people like myself to attend school only having to worry about academics, knowing that all the other plans are taken care of. Last, and most importantly, is that the transition from children's services to vocational rehabilitation was seamless. Given that the entire BESB organization exists in one building, they are able to coordinate with one another and there is a more successful interdepartmental cooperation.

I ask you to consider all of these factors when deciding the future of BESB. Thank you for your time, and I trust you will make the best decision for the future of students such as myself.

Sincerely,

Blessing Offor

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