

Dear Appropriations Committee,

My name is Cooper Kendall I am 14 years old and a freshman in high school. I have been receiving services from BESB for a long time. As I have gotten older the services have gotten so much better for me. They offer a lot of really cool things for teenagers. I understand how all of the things relate to me becoming more independent and building my self confidence.

I am the co president of the Student Advisory Council for BESB, we have monthly meetings. this group offer us a way to keep in touch with what is new at BESB and with each other. It provide us a chance to socialize with similar kids.

This past winter I was fortunate to go to Camp Abilities for an overnight stay, while I was there we were able to do a lot of sporting things that I never would have been able to play because of my blindness, but BESB made it possible for me. When I was in Middle School I attended several Essential Skills programs that provided us with helpful tools that I am able to use around the house, such as bright orange dots that help me determine the oven temp, to the correct setting on the washing machine. These are all things that are preparing me for when I will live on my own, without their help things would be a lot harder for me.

Every spring my TVI, teacher of the visually impaired, organizes an age appropriate field trip. They are always trips that build our confidence and let us know that we can do what everybody else our age does. One year they took us kayaking another we went horseback riding. Without BESB I never would have had those opportunities and never been able to experience what it feels like to do those things .

Thank you for taking the time to listen to what I had to say. I hope that you take under consideration that BESB is very important to me and my other friends that I have met through BESB. Without these services I wouldn't be able to see my friends or get these great services that have helped me over the years so much.