

Testimony regarding strengthening of Bullying Laws

My son who is 16 and diagnosed with autism has had a horrific time within the public school system. He managed thru elementary school, however by 8th grade he was dealing with both verbal and physical abuse within his charter school. He was left with no recourse but home tutoring for part of 8th grade until he went to Highroads School in Wallingford. He wanted to go back to public school for 8th grade so we agreed. He made it at the high school in Manchester for 3 months, being the brunt of taunts, rude remarks and some physical aggression on the part of teachers. IN NO WAY was the school system helpful at either reprimanding the bullies or helping my son manage the behavior. THEY BASICALLY IGNORED THE BEHAVIOR. So my son went back to home tutoring for the remainder of 9th grade, which we all know is not an education.

Happily, he agreed to go back to HighRoads for 10th grade and will stay there through graduation. He is attending summer school each summer to play catch up on his education, which has significant holes. My son is a high functioning person who could have managed the public school environment IF IT WERE EMOTIONALLY, VERBALLY AND PHYSICALLY SAFE. IT IS NOT.

Please put processes in place that will keep our schools safe for those who want to learn, which should include empowering teachers to suspend students from their classrooms.

Patty

Patricia Burke, MA CPRP
Director, Gilead Rehabilitation Center
Gilead Community Services, Inc
"Improving Lives, Building Futures"
31 DeJohn Dr., Middletown, CT 06457
Phone: (860)343-5310 Fax: (860)343-5314
Email: pburke@gileadcs.org
Web: www.gileadcs.org