

PRESTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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February 25, 2010

Representative Tom Reynolds
Via email (Tom.Reynolds@cga.gov)

Re: Pending SB 1038

Dear Representative Reynolds:

I am contacting you regarding the above-referenced pending Senate Bill. As a member of ConnCASE, I have reviewed their response so this bill and have indicated my agreement. Additionally, I wanted to communicate with you directly regarding the impact some of its requirements would have on Preston Public Schools.

As the district special education director and a former special education teacher, I recognize the importance of involving parents in all aspects of education, especially the parents of special needs children who often require specialized supports and modifications throughout their school day. I recognize how crucial regular school-to-home communication is to children's success, and I am also aware of how important compromise is when difficulties arise. However, I am cognizant of the impact this proposed legislation would have on Preston. As a small district, we employ relatively few personnel to meet the needs of our special education students (1.6 FTE school psychologists, 1.8 FTE speech language pathologists, 5 FTE special education teachers). These individuals are not only responsible for direct services but also provide student supports in many different capacities across our district and at our designated high school, Norwich Free Academy. The passage of this proposed legislation would impact our ability to serve student needs in a comprehensive manner due to the following:

- The bill proposes a requirement to conduct pre-PPT's (PPT meetings in advance of scheduled PPT meetings) which will take staff away from providing services to students and is, in my opinion, unnecessary. Our personnel communicate evaluation results to parents in advance of PPT's and can address concerns during these conversations. Parents also can contact an administrator to discuss issues ahead of a PPT.
- Along with this requirement comes the necessity for this pre-PPT to occur prior to sharing of initial evaluation results, determining eligibility and implementing the IEP which will significantly reduce the amount of time allowed to conduct an

evaluation (established under IDEA and CT regulations). Meeting such a requirement would reduce our ability to conduct thorough evaluations. Our staff members already observe a delicate balance between providing services and performing evaluations; such a requirement will add undue time pressure.

- Certainly there are times when multiple meetings will occur for varied reasons related to the complexity of the student's or family's needs. We look to provide for each student's needs on an individual basis, and I hope that the Legislature will continue to allow us to do so.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to communicate with you. I hope that you will consider ConnCASE's position at your upcoming Education Committee session.

Very truly yours,



Ivy K. Davis
Director of Curriculum, Instruction
& Special Education

CC: John J. Welch, Superintendent