

1105

Dear Education Committee,

Our kids need your help. Their education for years to come may hang in the balance based on your judgment. Please do not look the other way.

Your proposed legislation would be detrimental to children with autism, their families and, ultimately, the taxpayers.

As a father of a child with autism, some additional points of concern to consider include: a.) the professionals identified in the language are not qualified to provide these services; b.) there are already not enough SLP's, special education teachers and psychologists to meet CT's current educational needs so adding additional responsibilities to these professions will not meaningfully increase the number of providers; c.) without proper service delivery students with autism not only will not learn but can regress causing the cost of later treatment and lifelong care to increase; d.) supervision and direction by a designated administrator will add to the cost of providing services while decreasing the ability of qualified personnel to do their jobs.

Specifically, the proposed language states that ABA providers of "including, but not limited to, persons employed as psychologists, speech therapists and positions requiring certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in special education,"

Psychologists, speech therapists, and special education teachers are not usually trained to provide ABA services. If they are, then the current law would already enable them to provide ABA services.

Even worse, the phrase "Including but not limited to" means that anyone with any type of credential may be designated to provide these service and as autism is a full spectrum, to dilute the need for appropriate credentials would be to dilute the quality of care to families and children. How do you provide any quality control?

In addition, this bill contains the provision that those providing ABA services will be supervised and directed by "A local or regional board of education shall designate an administrator employed by the board of education to supervise the provision of applied behavior analysis services by assistant behavior analysts described in subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section, teachers and paraprofessionals described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of this section and persons described in subsection (b) of this section, if authorized to provide such services."

This means that even when a qualified Board Certified Behavior Analyst or another professional who is either certified or licensed in the state of Connecticut who has ABA within their scope of practice is involved, they cannot design or implement programming without the approval and direct involvement of a third party who is an administrator rather than someone trained to provide these services or even knowledgeable about autism.

Please rethink your position.

Best wishes,

William H. Mann, parent of two children with autism in Connecticut