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Testimony of David Scata, ConnCASE Legislative Representative
Education Committee
3/05/2012

Raised Bill No. 5353

AN ACT CONCERNING INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND OTHER
ISSUES RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee; my name is David Scata, Legislative Representative of ConnCASE. ConnCASE represents over two hundred public school administrators of special education in the state of Connecticut.

I am providing this testimony in support of Raised Bill 5353, An Act Concerning Individualized Education Programs and Other Issues Related to Special Education.
I would refer to the two aspects of the new language:

B) Upon request by a parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent, the responsible local or regional board of education shall provide such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent an opportunity to meet with a member of the planning and placement team designated by such board prior to the referral planning and placement team meeting at which the assessments and evaluations of the child or pupil who requires or may require special education is presented to such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent for the first time. Such meeting shall be for the sole purpose of discussing the planning and placement team process and any concerns such parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent has regarding the child or pupil who requires or may require special education.

G) Upon request by a parent, guardian, pupil or surrogate parent, the responsible local or regional board of education shall provide the assessments and evaluations used in the determination of eligibility for special education for a child or pupil to such parent, guardian, surrogate parent or pupil at least three school days before the referral planning and placement team meeting at which such assessments and evaluations will be discussed for the first time.

The proposed language provides the opportunity to help parents and or guardians to be better informed of the Planning and Placement Team process if requested. Providing parents the opportunity to meet with the PPT team prior to the first meeting of an initial referral would hopefully bring a comfort level to the parent and enable them to feel an equal member of the team which they are. In addition, most schools will review with parents the educational evaluation especially very involved evaluations prior to the PPT that reviews said such evaluation. If a student has had an extensive evaluation from multiple disciplines the time to review each at the PPT can become time intensive and may at times be overwhelming for a parent to hear the information for the first time. The opportunity if requested by the parent would help to answer questions and concerns by the parent prior to the PPT and thus enable them to become more informed decision makers for their child's educational program.

Both aspects of the proposed language should be considered as good educational practice.