

Andrea Estell, Psy.D., Chairman  
Union Board of Education  
12 Lawson Rd. Union, CT  
March 17, 2014

RE: HB 5562 An Act Concerning Special Education

Mr. Chairman and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Andrea Estell and I am the Chairman of the Town of Union Board of Education. Thank you for providing me an opportunity to support House Bill 5562, An Act Concerning Special Education.

Over a two-year period Union's special education population has increased significantly to 16 percent of its total student population. Given the number of students and the distribution of the necessary interventions it difficult, if not impossible, to qualify for Excess Cost reimbursement under the current formula despite the fact that overall expenditures have risen dramatically.

Tomorrow night we are scheduled to meet with the Board of Finance to request an additional appropriation for the current fiscal year. The additional appropriate will result in a total increase of 14.3 percent over the 2013-14 budget. The majority of the additional appropriation will pay for an unanticipated 63 percent increase special education costs. Yet, we will still not qualify for any reimbursement this under the current structure.

We will also be presenting our budget proposal for fiscal year 2014 - 15 that represents a 16 percent bottom line increase with a 22 percent increase in budgeted special education expenditures.

Under the current Excess Cost Reimbursement formula, only two of our students next year would qualify for reimbursement resulting in a 4.6 percent reduction in our budget. The proposed Three Tier Excess Cost formula would qualify the expenditures for a third student resulting in a further reduction of our budget by 1.2 percent.

I sincerely hope that this testimony will assist you in your deliberation of HB 5562. Thank you for your desire to help local public schools continue the practice of serving the needs of their students in manner that they deserve.

Respectfully,

Andrea Estell, Psy.D.,  
Chairman  
Union Board of Education