

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Good Afternoon, and thank you for your time to listen to me regarding Proposed S.B. No. 120 bill. It has been unfortunate that many students suffer from dyslexia. Boards of education have ignored this type of disability. By including dyslexia on IEPs this will force cities and towns in Connecticut to provide adequate services for our children. If the districts can't provide adequate services then they should be forced to send the student to a facility that can correct the problem. Many parents that come across this situation are forced to accept the services that the district can only provide. This can cause frustration to parents and the child.

At this time the only way a parent can get the services that the child needs is by hiring an attorney to force the district to send a child to the proper school. Here is the problem: how many families are able to pay for all legal fees? I have felt the the frustration time and time again with my son's PPT meetings. Every year was the same information stating "That my son has improved this year." My question to the administrators would be "what was his grade level?" The grade level for my son was 2nd grade. This had gone on for years. By ninth grade he was still on a 2nd grade level. I was so angry that we knew that we had to do something. I promised myself and my dream would be that my son will be reading by the time he graduated from high school.

After much meetings and testing on my son, he was placed at Ben Bronz Academy in West Hartford for tenth grade. This was the best move we ever made. Everyday I would see him practice his CyberSlate (word practice) on his computer. He be timed and he had me help go through every word. This practice needed to done everyday. It was a lot of work and discipline. Each class at Ben Bronz was geared with exercises to help him decode the words. In June 2011, my son was graduating from Ben Bronz on a 10th grade reading level. I got my wish!!!! During the ceremony he made a speech stating that what his disability was and how he would see words different from others. He had dyslexia. His speech was incredible for someone that didn't prepare that much. He announced that he will be attending on the following Monday, his first choice at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. His major is Marine Engineering. As a junior cadet, he has traveled all over the world. He just returned at the end of February from his internship from the Persian Gulf. He will be graduating from MMA in June 2015. This would not be possible if I didn't fight for him. If I continued to keep him in district he would have not been able to continue his education at all. He would be considered illiterate. His strength has been math. By reading he is able to read his textbooks and get tutoring. He is on his way to becoming an Engineer. Another life saved!!!!

Our schools are failing the students that need more help. There is no chance for success. By Proposed S.B. no. 120 let's hold the school districts accountable. Thank you!!!

Joan Waters  
18 Greenbriar Lane  
Newtown, CT 06470  
203-426-2831