

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to submit testimony in reference to HB 7255 & HB 7252. My name is Kelly Truchsess and I am the Director of Special Services for the Danbury Public Schools. I appreciate you taking the time to listen to my input.

In reference to proposed bill No. 7255 which seeks to establish a task force to conduct a study regarding the creation of a state special education predictable cost cooperative, as Director of Special Services, I am in support of this proposal for several reasons. First this initiative would serve to provide equitable funding to all districts based on students needs across the state. Second, it would assist districts with funding when unexpected costs arise, such as students with significant needs moving into a district during the middle of a school year. Lastly, it would assist districts in better planning budgets to support the needs of our special education students. The current funding of special education costs is not equitable and this initiative would seek to bring equality to that system.

In reference to proposed bill No. 7252, which seeks to provide parents, guardians, surrogates and independent evaluators the right to observe a child during the regular school day, I would advise the committee to think of additional parameters when considering this initiative. As Director of Special services, I encourage parents to observe their children. However, a critical piece of information that the committee must consider in reference to this bill is how the parent is to notify the school and with what advanced notice they should be required to provide. To allow parents to show up at the school and observe without notice can be disruptive of the operations of the school and the education of all students in the classroom. In addition, how will student confidentiality be maintained when allowing additional individuals, such as outside evaluators, to come into a school and observe? It is my recommendation that the committee consider adding additional parameters to this bill, including the need to schedule observation and limiting the number of additional observers, to ensure the confidentiality of all students and to support the educational process.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak with you and for providing my input on proposed bills 7255 and 7252.

Sincerely,

Kelly Truchsess
Director of Special Services
Danbury Public Schools