

Testimony in Support of  
SB 976 An Act Concerning Technical High Schools  
March 8, 2020

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and Members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 976, so that Connecticut Technical and Career High Schools can no longer justify discriminating against students with disabilities.

Imagine this picture picture.

The guy with the hat is my son, the guy in the suit is a race car driver. The trophy in the middle is for winning the Granite State series, late model pro stock competition, one step away from NASCAR. My son has been working with this incredible race car driver on the pit crew for three-years.

Yet, both of these young men were discouraged from applying to a Technical High School because they are students with IEP's (Individual Education Plan).

In September of 2019, my son started on what I termed "the grand experiment." After high school, we registered him in the Gateway Automotive Program in North Haven.

The textbook it is nearly two-thousand pages and weighs eight pounds.

So, what happens when you take a student who has **never** been without a para, been grouped with the same three students for seven years, taken only highly modified tests, and put him in a college-level class without modifications?

In his first semester, my son received a solid B; and completed 11 certifications. He is now completing his second year with an A- average.

This is a note from his Professor:

*"Charlie seems to be enjoying the process. He follows along and has correct answers to questions. He kind of blends in here. All good..."*

It's heartbreaking that during those crucial developmental high school years, my son was robbed of making friends, and creating a social network, with other like-minded students.

Instead, for seven years, he was grouped with the same wonderful three students, none of whom shared his interest in cars.

Here is what technical high schools can learn from students like my son. People who like to work with their hands also learn with their hands. These students are kinesthetic learners. Kinesthetic learners don't become proficient in reading and math through the methods taught in most general education settings. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is an astounding number of students in technical high schools with neither math or language arts proficiency.

It is time that we stop living in fear of what students with perceived disabilities might do to the performance of a Technical High School and begin to encourage applications from students with IEP's.

Thank you for your time. I am grateful to be heard.

Lisa Nee

40 Chestnut Hill Road

Madison, CT. 06443