

Good morning, Senator and committee members:

I am the father and an advocate of a 6-year-old boy diagnosed with high-functioning autism and speech delay. I am here to support State Bill 1000 which would allow a child to receive a free and appropriate education in a public or private school environment.

We pulled our son out of public school in November 2006 due to the following reasons:

- Non-compliance by the school to the agreed upon ARD
- Signs of behavioral regression (i.e. calling himself and others names)
- He has become a "runner"; consequently he was always running from the autism specialist's classroom
- Restraining incidents
- Constant changing of his support aides; he needs structure, but had 6 different support aides which he had to acclimate to
- Limited services for his speech delay
- Rejection of Adaptive P.E. services (regardless of the fact that he joined Special Olympics through the school district)
- Rejection of O.T. services
- Staff was not adequately trained to handle a child with autism

Many of these services were denied irregardless of the fact that we substantiated our requests by documented evaluations and recommendations by certified doctors and behavioral specialists.

Our ARD meetings were always adversarial in lieu of collaborative. We would walk into ARD's with close to 15 school and district administrators and staff present. Intimidation tactics were used, claiming ignorance of what services could be provided were used, or simply blatant denial of services. Also, specific ARD committee members, general education teachers, rarely spoke and in one instance were deemed, "not qualified" to answer our questions by the school principal.

One of our biggest obstacles was our son's inclusion into the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The school always wanted to have all his academic courses taught in the Academic Mastery Classroom (AMC) and not in the General Education classroom. AMC, if used correctly if at all, should be used as a resource and not as a placement. The constant transitioning between the General Education classroom to AMC to specials also heightened his anxiety and behaviors.

Presently, our son attends a private school, which we pay for out of pocket along with other of denied services (speech and O.T.), where he has shown vast improvement in his behaviors, academics, speech, socialization and transitioning. His mood is always pleasant and goes to school without a problem. He's become more communicative and can carry small conversations with people. His social skills are improving where from time to time he may initiate play with other children at a McDonalds' playground.

His private school environment has enabled him to progress with minimal obstacles laid out in front of him by a public school administration. Thus State Bill 1000 is important to not only my son's education, but also to his future as a contributing member of society.

Thank you,

Rodolfo G. De La Rosa  
1003 Lynx Bend,  
San Antonio, Texas 78251  
(210) 685-9527  
E-mail: [rodolfo@artchitecture-tx.com](mailto:rodolfo@artchitecture-tx.com)