

## The Arc of Texas

Senate Education Committee

February 24, 2009

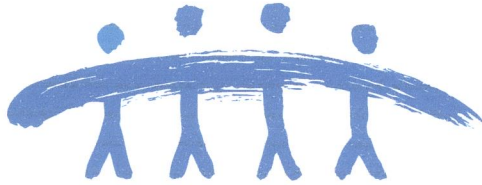
SB 100

- **Good Morning, I am Rona Statman, Director of Family Support Services for The Arc of Texas, a statewide non profit organization that advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be fully included in their communities**
- **All children with disabilities have the right to receive a free appropriate public education including the provision of special education and related services that will prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. They have the right to receive an education in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supplementary aids and services, to progress in the general education curriculum, and to receive scientific research based instruction from highly qualified teachers.**
- **School districts are required to provide teachers with staff development and training on scientific research based best practices to ensure the success of their students.**
- **The majority of students with disabilities spend all or most of their school day in general education classes; As more students with disabilities are served in the regular education classroom we must address the need to provide training for teachers to prepare them to provide appropriate instruction and support to their students.**
- **Most regular education teachers have received little or no training in teaching students with disabilities in their undergraduate courses.**
- **The number of special education students in general education classes continues to increase because of requirements of NCLB, such as access to Highly Qualified Teachers and requirements to take the same assessments as other students;**
- **Parents of students with disabilities consistently identify lack of disability-specific training for general education teachers as the biggest impediment to the successful education of their children;**
- **Teachers of students with disabilities need ongoing training, technical assistance and mentoring to implement scientific research based instructional strategies, positive behavior intervention strategies and modifying the general education curriculum to help students with disabilities be successful in general education classrooms. School districts should implement best practices such as co-teaching that**

*Creating opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be included in their communities and make the choices that affect their lives.*

8001 Centre Park Drive, Suite 100 • Austin, TX 78754 • 512-454-6694 • 1-800-252-9729 • fax 512-454-4956

[www.thearcoftexas.org](http://www.thearcoftexas.org)



## The Arc of Texas

combines special education expertise in teaching students with disabilities and content expertise provided by grade level regular education teachers.

- **Many students with disabilities get support during the day from paraprofessionals that must be trained to support them to reach their academic and functional goals;**
- **The institutes should provide training in all disability areas, including autism. There is so much current research that, even among teachers with previous training, there is a need to update what they were taught to assure they are using techniques and strategies that are effective.**
- **Students with severe disabilities need teachers who have specialized training and expertise**
- **Students with severe behavior disabilities, including autism, need teachers that are supervised by board certified behavior analysts. Many school districts do not have access to this degree of expertise.**
- **Some school districts provide multiple opportunities for training and support and some don't. Others may take advantage of training provided by their regional education service center. There is no uniformity in type or quality of training.**
- **Online training is a tool that can support training initiatives but cannot replace face to face hands on training and technical assistance.**
- **There is no statewide training academy that provides consistent and excellent training for teachers and paraprofessionals who serve all students with disabilities. Training academies should be provided during the summer, provide stipends to teachers, and provide intense training opportunities that includes ongoing support, technical assistance and mentoring of teachers.**
- **Training academies for teachers of students with disabilities will become one of the essential tools to ensure highly qualified teachers use scientific research based best practices in meeting the academic, behavioral and functional goals for all students with disabilities.**