

Kathleen B. Kourebanas

3/30/16

Testimony submit to Senate on behalf of daughter, Martha Kourebanas, age 16 at risk for residential out of state placement

Contacts: Essex High School

Erin Maguire, LEA ([emaguire@ccsuvt.org](mailto:emaguire@ccsuvt.org)) lead on Act 264 crisis placement

Kathleen Burke Kourebanas, parent ([kathleenbk@comcast.net](mailto:kathleenbk@comcast.net))

Trans II self manage waiver ([kara@transitionII.com](mailto:kara@transitionII.com))

MK currently staffed 2:1 RBT and BCBA oversight

MK age 16.5, currently on waitlist out of state residential placement

Currently awaiting LIT, completed ACT 264 with a comprehensive plan to avoid residential placement. IEP team recommends wrap around home services to avoid out of state placement. Funding 1 time cost needed.

**A) VT home placement wrap around, stay in home/school/community:**

**No additional educational costs**

**1 time funding request to be submitted by Trans II (\$136,000, parent will contribute by paying 'budget items list', see estimate)**

**No additional waiver funds needed**

**B) OUT of State Residential:**

**Approximately \$350,000 to \$450,000/year (MK is a 2:1 staff 24/7)**

**(\$150,000 to \$250,000 INCREASE COSTS PER YEAR, compared to staying in VT home placement)**

**At graduation, MK lives in group adult home on campus. NO RETURN TO VT date after age 22, until appropriate services are available to her. (costs post age 22, to be determined.)**

Summary:

Plan A is what family wants. Fiscally responsible, smooth transition to adulthood, stay in current home/vocation/occupation/community/school, MK continues current health care providers: Doctor/Psychiatrist/Dentist. Must modify home as IEP team recommends, MK stays in ALL natural supports, behavior plan becomes a 'continuum', more apt to reach 1:1 staffing ratio goal. VT wants to keep VT children and VT dollars in VT, support family, support local economy, etc.

Plan B will destabilize MK, rip loving family apart, leave home, community, all natural supports, losing all progress worked for up until this point. MK will not have a re-entry date, as residential chosen because of long term adulthood placement, as VT has none. MK will graduate at 22 and then live in adult group home on campus. MK will not return to VT until appropriate residential programs are built in VT. Plan B is essentially double current educational costs. Residential school does not accept Medicaid.

**Language to add to Bill H.859 (An Act relating to Special Education)**

Please add:

1) "VT is committed to educating students WITHIN THE STATE OF VERMONT, as opposed to out of state placements, whenever a reasonable VT based placement exists."

2)"Funding this VT Based placement will be divided by AOE and DAIL, just like out of state costs are shared."

\*"certain conditions must be met:

-documented long term disability

-high cost of care

-need for residential placement"

3)allowing for flexibility in choice allows for creative solutions that are stymied by the current funding system.

4)This could give the school district a possible higher 'investment allowance' that allows them to spend a higher amount in one (1) year, when they prove that it will, in turn, save significant spending over the subsequent three (3) years.

(In MK case, it would solve the lack of 'system of funding' issue that will essentially send MK out of state to seek services, in other words: 1 time funding to save money to stay in community, as that is what DAIL and VT want. This will give school districts control and push to build the infrastructure needed in VT.)

Thank you so much,

Kathleen Burke Kourebanas  
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