

Education Testimony

Good afternoon. My name is Kaiya Andrews and I'm the mother of two children with special needs. I have a son that is almost 4 years old and has social and emotional delays. He also has some mobility delays as well. When we started to notice these issues we thought that it may be his age but when daycare also saw these issues we had a meeting to discuss these and realized he needed to be evaluated. After being evaluated we found out his delays and were told he needed an Individualized Education Program, which is also called an IEP. Sadly he could not get an IEP at Thatcher Brook Elementary School because he was not enrolled. He had to go all the way to Moretown School to get his IEP and more evaluation. I'm glad that these are in place but I wish I could get my son's IEP through Thatcher Brook. We are working closely on his

goals but it's hard because we live in Waterbury and his IEP is through Moretown. So his Special educator, Kelly Poulin travels to him once a week to meet him at daycare where he is for Pre K. This is the other issue we have. In Waterbury, Thatcher Brook doesn't have enough room for the PreK program so families that have children their get first dibs. Then from there it is a lottery system. I have two children one is 5 and the other is 4, my son. When my daughter was 3 years old and ready to enter Pre K we had to enter the lottery system and again when she was 4. We were having the same issue with my son before we realized he was showing delays for his age. Now that my daughter is 5 she will be in kindergarten at Thatcher Brook but my son will be going to Moretown in 2019 because that's where we had to enroll him to get him an IEP. I think this is pretty messed up to have two children going to separate schools. I

also think that it's messed up that my son only gets services from his IEP once a week because he lives and goes to daycare in Waterbury but we had to go to another town to get his IEP because Thatcher Brook won't do an IEP unless the the child is enrolled there. My education was not great when I was younger and I don't want my children to fall through the educational gaps like I did. I'm a 28 year old mother with a disability and going to college but being told that my education is like swiss cheese. I have so many holes in my education because teachers didn't think it was prudent to educate children with disabilities with non-disabled peers. I was bounced in the state system from one place to another and attended schools in other states that have different education guidelines. For example, in Massachusetts at the age of 16 I was learning something called Papaya which is independent skills/home economics. When I

moved back to Vermont, Papaya wasn't a requirement in Vermont schools. There are many other things that I learned that Vermont education system doesn't do. So I don't want my children to inherit the swiss cheese education. Please don't cut the education funding. Instead, please work on making it better and effective so that my children can be successful in school and life. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you