



Vermont Independent
Schools Association

February 21, 2018

Senator Philip Baruth, Chair
Vermont Senate Education Committee
via email

Dear Senator Baruth:

I am writing to add a clarification to the discussion initiated by Senator Bray during yesterday's Senate Education Committee meeting of special education money flows.

Special education is a federal entitlement to students with disabilities, provided through a mandate on the State and local education authorities. No matter where a student on an Individual Education Program (IEP) is receiving services, the funds must come from and be administered by the public education system.

The notion that after some defined time period the public system might be freed from having to pay for a special education student's services at an approved independent school is incorrect. Federal law holds the State and LEA responsible for special education at all times.

The administrative overhead for finding and hiring scarce qualified teachers and taking on the extraordinary paperwork requirements for documenting services and justifying and invoicing for student service expenses is daunting for small schools. LEAs provide all these overhead services to public schools. No such support is available to independents, even though most have very limited capacity to meet large new administrative requirements.

VISA's wish is that S.229 will give independent schools equitable access to the wrap-around services LEAs now provide to the public schools.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mill Moore" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mill Moore, Executive Director

copies: Senators Balint, Benning, Bray, Ingram, Branagan