

## Testimony For Legislature

Gavin Keep

Hello, My name is Gavin Keep and I live in Sharon and attend The Sharon Academy where I am in 8th grade.

When I heard you were asking for students to share their ideas about school, I was excited to come speak to you. The thing I value most about my current education is the support I receive from my teachers and my classmates. My school is able to achieve these supports because of how small it is as a whole and also because each class is small. For example, my Algebra 1 class has 11 students in it and we can go to the teacher for help when we need support. Both a small community of students and small class sizes has helped me get the support I need to succeed.

A little bit more about me. I was diagnosed at three years old with ADHD and moved from Georgia to Sharon, Vermont when I was 7. When any school I have attended has worked best for me, it has been because the teachers know who I am as an individual and can support the variety of ways that I learn. Some of those ways are different from my friends and I do better in school when teachers can see each of us and treat each of us in a unique way.

I bet that many of those teachers have also gotten all sorts of training in how to help lots of different kids but you only know what tool to use with a kid if you can know that kid. So I want all the schools in Vermont to be places where kids are known really well by their teachers.

At my current school, The Sharon Academy, this is exactly what I get. My teachers know what I need to learn best and help me to do the best I can. While some in this country are worried that the government might get rid of 504 plans (and I am really against that obviously), one thing that makes me feel less stressed is knowing that I go to a school where, regardless of what the national rules might be, they will know who I am and help me to learn the ways I need to.

In conclusion, my biggest hope for the future of education in Vermont is that all kids will be able to attend schools where teachers can know them really well and where those teachers can then know which tools to use to help those kids learn the best. Not all methods of teaching work for every student and being at a small school has really made a difference for me.