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Dear Senate Education Committee,

I currently work for the White River Valley Supervisory Union as an Early Childhood Special Educator. In the course of my career, I have worked in 3 states, all servicing neurodivergent young children and I have seen different models at work. Our current model at the WRVSU is efficient while meeting the needs of some of our most intensive students.

Students in our supervisory union benefit from community schools in a variety of ways. For our students with the most intensive needs, we are able to provide a variety of support and services through partnerships with our local health clinics, parent visitor programs, and strong connections with school staff. This provides our families with a continuum of services that will be difficult to accomplish if their child's school is 1-2 hours away.

Families and guardians are a valued member of our team and are included in the processes we use to determine services and provide additional support. Instead of needing to connect with multiple agencies on their own, we help to streamline that process by pulling everyone together. We support families, and each other in our individual roles with strong relationships and ongoing communication.

If our students begin attending much larger schools, I am concerned those the farthest away will get lost in the shuffle. It is easy to think we can use technology to stay connected, but face-to-face contact goes a long way to building trust.

Travel itself is a challenge when thinking about young children. If we are putting young children on buses with lengthy travel times this will significantly impact the quality of their day as well as the ability of the families and guardians to readily participate in their child's education. Working families as well as families with limited resources could easily feel cut off from the system meant to support their child's growth and development.

Preschool is often our families first exposure to the public school system. It is important that we do it right so parents feel supported and able to advocate for the needs of their child. Taking away the "community" that they currently rely on will have negative impacts for the family, guardians and children we are here to support.

Please protect our way of work so we can continue to support our families, guardians and children.

Sincerely,

Kristin R. Radloff