

# MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT 52

Greene ♦ Leeds ♦ Turner

486 Turner Center Road

Turner, Maine 04282

KIMBERLY BRANDT.  
SUPERINTENDENT

MICHELE COATES  
BUSINESS MANAGER

THERESA GILLIS  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

REBEKAH DRYSDALE  
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

March 17, 2021

Dear Senator/Representative,

I am writing to you today to urge you **not** to pass the proposed bill LD 552, An Act To Strengthen the Individualized Education Program Process. In spite of this bill's name, it actually has the potential to negatively impact our ability to provide a free appropriate public education to students with Individual Education Plans.

In our schools, we work collaboratively as teams to develop our students' Individual Education Plans in order to meet their academic and functional needs. Currently, if a consensus is not reached, which does happen, our district determines the appropriateness of the plan and implements it providing the parents/guardians prior written notice.

According to LD 552, the IEP team must come to consensus before an IEP can be implemented. This would result in a student remaining in inappropriate programming for a potentially long period of time, which would constitute a denial of FAPE, in addition to bringing further legal action against the school district. This is of great concern to our schools, because we have had situations where students would have been denied appropriate access to special education services, remain in an unsafe environment, or continue in a restrictive placement and program.

Another concern for this bill is that any staff member working with the child may make themselves a member of the IEP team. Our district ensures that we have a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and an administrator present at IEP meetings for students. Providing staff the ability to make themselves members of the team will potentially take services away from other students and potentially put the district at risk of not meeting our IEP obligations. Decisions regarding participants at IEP meetings should be left up to building administrators to determine what is best for all of the students in their schools.

As you consider the proposed bill I ask that you do not let IEP members deny our students the right to a free and appropriate public education and increase our litigation and associated costs that would be better expended supporting FAPE.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rebekah Drysdale  
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