



Megan Holden, M.S.Ed
Instructional Strategist

March 18, 2021

Dear Education Committee Members,

I am writing today to share my concerns regarding the proposed bill, LD 552, An Act to Strengthen the Individualized Education Program Process. As an administrative designee who runs approximately 5 IEP meetings every week (and significantly more during this pandemic), I am troubled by the language regarding a 'team consensus' for any change to the programming of a student. Like many, I am worried about the impact that a 'stay put' placement would have on the day to day educational programming of students whose team cannot all agree on an appropriate placement. While the majority of teams that I work with typically will come to a consensus, I am finding that parents will often not agree with the school district's assessment of their child in terms of eligibility for special education services. In many cases, parents will argue that their child is struggling far more than any standardized or school-based data indicates. When this data shows that a child is performing at a level commensurate to typically developing peers, the team cannot meet the legal threshold to deem a child 'eligible' for services. What I anticipate is parental disagreement when the school no longer has data to support continuing with an IEP. If LD 552 passes, I foresee students being stuck in special education, in direct violation of their least restrictive environment, if their parents are nervous, or disagree with the multiple data points provided by the school district. More commonly, I would think that any member of the IEP team, even those who participate because of a legal obligation with little knowledge of the student, would be able to override the recommendations of the team for any reason. In some instances, it may have nothing to do with the child-and could be about conflicts between the adults. It seems petty, but I have witnessed stranger things happen at IEP meetings. This bill would be in opposition to federal law, and that, in and of itself, would open up new avenues for litigation which are both costly and demoralizing for all involved.

I genuinely hope you listen to the educators providing testimony on the bill, and consider the possible outcomes that do not have the best interests of students at heart.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Megan Holden, MSED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Megan Holden", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Greely Middle School
Mabel I. Wilson School
3-5 Instructional Strategist

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