

Sarah Vickers  
Bangor

I am writing to you with concern regarding the proposed LD 522. I am concerned that this proposed change is not a positive change for students with disabilities. My first concern is with the change around consensus within an IEP team meeting. As an IEP coordinator from my district and a special education teacher I am aware how important consensus is however our first duty is to the student and how to best support a student. I have work in a specialized program for students with behavioral challenges. At times we have to make change of placement decisions based on student needs. I have had parents resistant/ refuse this change. The decision is based on safety for the student/staff and being able to meet the students needs. If we as a team have to reach consensus this puts the student at risk. Another possible scenario is if an IEP team is recommending placement in the special education setting. If a team member refuses this, the student is harmed by not receiving access to programming that can best meet there needs, based on their disabilities. The other concern I have regarding this proposed change is who is considered to be an IEP team member. For example, if an educational technician is considered an IEP team member and they are not in attendance then any changes to the students IEP would not be able to occur. Also, this would cause district to incur additional costs by paying staff to work past their hourly schedule. I want to reiterate school districts work very hard to meet consensus for determinations for a student. By making these changes it would be challenging for districts to meet student needs.