

James & Leslie Dyer
859 Litchfield Road
Bowdoin, Maine 04287

January 30, 2024

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, our names are Jim and Leslie Dyer, we are the grandparents of Acer James Dyer; he started attending Woodford School in Sept 2023.

Acer has a rare condition called 5q14.3, a genetic disorder, with only 17 that have been studied to date.

After a struggle to find a program for him to attend, we came across Woodfords Family Services School.

The director, Charissa Fortier, helped us with placement and other state need programs so he could attend.

They were great to deal with, Making the process easy for us.

At the start of the program, Acer's ability to walk, speech and other skills was limited due to onsite PT at the location at his residence. The person providing the PT was very good but limited to time restraints of the program. Once enrolled at Woodfords, Acer excelled in many areas that included walking independently at times and his motor skills. He is nonverbal and relies on hand gestures to communicate to let others know what he wants. This alone has come along ways since starting at the school, he has more interest in letting us know what he wants when he needs it.

Acer's personality shines at almost any time during the day but seeing his reactions upon meeting his teachers at the door of the school in the Morning makes any heart melt, he just absolutely is joyful at seeing the people that work with him throughout the day.

The staff at Woodford's, not only professional but they are so outgoing and eager to meet and greet us every day, it makes us overjoyed to send Acer there.

At this point Acer is enrolled in Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy, the staff's dedication to these programs has had a big impact on Acer, we have noticed him coming out of his shell more than usual, outgoing and willing to try new things that at first was very overwhelming for him.

We feel that his growth and progress is solely due to the Staff and the Woodford school for this progress that Acer has made, we look forward to continuing with Acer's schooling at Woodford.

We hope and pray that the state sees the need for the school and its progress and the effects it has on the children attending Woodfords.

Sincerely,

James and Leslie Dyer