

Submitter: Eriko Ono
On Behalf Of: my community and disabled students
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2682

Hello,

I am writing in support of HB 2682. I believe Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education is critical to creating a foundation for success for students with disabilities. But we need to make sure we are adequately addressing and resourcing the increased number of students in preschool who need services. And I believe there are many improvements that can and should be made to transition those students AND their support plans and accommodations to early childhood education.

When my son started kindergarten there wasn't any collaboration between his Early Intervention team and his kindergarten/school team. It doesn't make sense to me to have a team of professionals work with my child throughout pre-school only to have them drop off with no overlap in communication with his elementary school team. Why re-invent the wheel? There should be check ins so that the students progress continues to be monitored and teams can consult with one another on goals and strategies. Not only would this provide valuable resources to the elementary school team, it would help the Early Intervention teams develop meaningful support plans and accommodations for the schools their students will be starting. My son had a really great preschool experience with the help from our Early Intervention team. But he had, actually we had, a very difficult and traumatic kindergarten year in our neighborhood school. The following year we moved him to a different school that had an ISC, or Intensive Skills Classroom (a self contained classroom) where he had the supports he needed.

I believe that a big piece that has been missing in for our students with disabilities is collaboration amongst their support teams (parents, schools, and specialists). And having input that comes from Early Intervention specialists, parents, and educators on how to identify and improve services is the first step. This will prevent some students from hitting barriers as they progress through school. It will prevent some placements in self contained classrooms or other more restrictive learning environments. It will also establish more needed expectations and understanding for Early Childhood educators to support students with disabilities and their accommodations.

That is why I support HB 2682. Thank you.

-Eriko Ono