

Statement of Hopeanne Wohlers in support of House Bill 3007

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education:

I'm writing to communicate my strong support of HB 3007.

HB 3007 will help students who are recovering from brain injuries by requiring schools to provide appropriate, person-centered, academic, behavioral, social, emotional, and physical accommodations to ensure that the student has the best possible recovery.

I have worked in special education for 9 years now, so I know the importance and difference that suitable accommodations can have for our learners. Recently, I experienced a mild concussion and my doctor gave me a list of accommodations to implement. She explained that when students experience a TBI, she advocates that schools provide accommodations and assess differently while the student is in recovery. It can be very difficult to understand what students with disabilities face everyday in our education system, but this recent experience has given me a glimpse into the various hardships in meeting learning and work expectations when your brain is atypical. Screen masks, color filters, scheduled breaks, and additional processing time have allowed me to continue to do my job while my injury heals. It has made an immense difference in my daily pain levels and frustration to be able to access these supports and feel supported by my colleagues.

No student ever wants to suffer a brain injury, but many still do. During their recovery, they will struggle with their classwork, their social interactions, their mental and behavioral health, and with physical pain. The last thing a school should do is make it harder for the student to recover.

HB 3007 requires a school to act in the best interest of the student, and give them the accommodations they need during their brain injury recovery. If, because of their brain injury, they need help with classwork, or homework, or with their friends, the school should be providing that help. If they need physical accommodation in their classrooms because of the lights, or the noises, or whatever, they should get those accommodations, as well. HB 3007 will help ensure that students recovering from brain injuries get the accommodations they need.

Please support HB 3007.

Best,
Hopeanne Wohlers