

Written testimony before
Special Education and Related Services Funding Task Force

On

Evidence-Based Solutions for Special Education

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

As a parent of students who directly benefited from special education services and a former school board member who saw the positive impacts of special education services within the district, and the challenges of meeting those needs without these services being fully funded, I urge this task force to acknowledge the benefits of special education services and recommend that they be fully funded (per state law – statewide average of 92% of the excess costs for special education not funded by the Federal Government).

I know that significant evidence has been presented in the past regarding the benefits of special education services along with the negatives of underfunding it. But here are a few more if you really need something to review.

- [The Classroom Impact of Trained Special Needs Education Teachers in Selected Schools: An Evaluation Study](#)
- [Sample records for effective special education](#)
- [Importance of special education](#)

However, I believe this task force is more about ignoring the overwhelming evidence supporting fully funded special education services. Instead, the task force is focused on finding and amplifying whatever out of context bit of information that might be out there to justify underfunding special education services. Which of course means districts must pull from the general fund to meet these needs, violating the spirit, if not the letter, of the Gannon ruling.

Fully funding special education benefits all kids within a district if for no other reason than dollars aren't taken away from other general fund services to partially shore up special education services. And with districts still recovering from the pandemic, it's even more critical that our public school districts be fully funded. Here's but one example of how underfunding impacts school districts, kids and families, and their communities - <https://marcelharmon67.substack.com/p/lawrences-school-district-budget>.

I've also spent my entire adult life working in the private sector. Strong public schools are critical for attracting and keeping employees. They're also critical for maintaining / replenishing a high quality

workforce in our state over the long term. You can't have strong public schools without fully funding them. Underfunding special education hurts our kids, hurts our communities, hurts our businesses, and ultimately our state's economy.

I respectfully ask that this task force recommend special education services be funded at 92% of the special education excess costs not funded by the Federal Government.