

We Must Advocate for Those Without a Voice
Special Education Eligibility in America's Schools
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As a leader in the community and taxpayer, I am hopeful that you will be share my passion to help children in our community. There is a serious injustice occurring in schools, not only in Orange County, but across the United States. Our children are being assaulted with political and corporate rapacity. Teachers and parents substantiate, that children in need of special education services, are being denied! Students with diagnoses from doctors, as well as parental advocacy are being deprived the right to a fair and equal education. This is a moral and legal injustice. As a veteran teacher, I am often disgusted by the changes I have observed in the educational system over the past few years. We possess decades of research demonstrating the most effective developmentally appropriate practices. Yet, this knowledge is being replaced by test preparation and financial budget boundaries.

It is our responsibility as a society to care for our children and foster their learning experiences, in an effort to create a sound educational foundation. Individuals learn best through hands on experience and “play.” The brain is most permeable up to the age of 4. Socialization and learning through problem-solving creates opportunities to establish prior knowledge so that students can scaffold new information in the future. Despite this research-based insight, schools across the county have replaced constructivist learning with standardized tests, technology, and “data-driven instruction.” Sand and water tables have been replaced with pencils and digital passwords. Dramatic play, recess, and creativity, are substituted with inappropriate environmental and cognitive expectations. Although this is an ethical perspective, it is not illegal to impose educational procedures. However, it is clear that experts in the field of education are NOT making decisions regarding the education and teaching of children.

Recently, I was astonished to learn that despite the unquestionable evidence proving that many student were learning disabled, they were still deemed ineligible for Special Education services. Regardless of interventions and years of documentation by parents, teachers, and physicians, the “committee” deemed the child ineligible. As an educator, I am irate and continue to work with the families in an effort to meet the child’s needs. However, after experiencing this same pattern repeatedly, I do NOT understand how this could happen in our current education system.

Initially I began pulling out my educational law and learning disability resources desperate to find a resolution to this insanity. I realized that the best way to express my own frustration and hopefully develop a solution is with a team of other “Whole-child” supporters. I reached out to educational staff members and parents throughout cities, counties, and even counties. After posting my quandary on a private educational forum for teachers, I was amazed and appalled when within minutes, dozens of teachers shared their similar experiences across the country. This was not an isolated situation, but hundreds..., no thousands of children, were deemed ineligible for special education services despite mountains of documentation stating otherwise. How could this be happening across the country and politicians are not fighting for justice?? Why are parents, teachers, and advocates not banning together to make change for our children?

Unfortunately, I learned that money, greed, and political gain are playing a role in this discrimination. According to one source, districts can be fined if they have too many special education students! Furthermore, when children are classified, it requires different financial obligations and budgets. Let’s not forget about the “keeping up with appearances” factor. Are leaders still seriously worried about the reputation and appearances over a child well-being? Students that are deemed ineligible after years of difficulty, become old enough to realize they struggle in comparison with other students. Unfortunately, the result becomes damages self-esteem and increased behavior issues. These behaviors arise because the individual becomes “lost” and is trying to escape. The educational field should not possess corporate procedures and financial gain mentality. These are children and we are constructing their future internal dialogue. We need to support America’s children and create opportunities for development and individuality. It is our responsibility to establish opportunities for children to believe in themselves and their future!

I am not foolish and realize those that advocate can be subjected to retribution and sabotage. However, I cannot understand why more people are not standing up to this injustice occurring in our country. This issue is not about money or debate, it is about children! They are OUR future. We need to stand up for the voiceless and help others to find their voice as well. This is a conversation that needs to be addressed. I am happy to share my research with anyone interested. Please stand up for a fair and equal education for all students. I look forward to your response, as well as hopefully working with you to create a better future for our children.