

Dear Chair Richardson and Committee Members,

My name is Jessica Slominski and I live in North Oaks, MN. In a typical school year, my son receives full time one-on-one support from a paraprofessional. He is multiple grades below level and has difficulty focusing, mild intellectual disability and delayed gross, fine and speech skills.

Before school starting, I asked for in-home support and was originally told no. After the MDE's release regarding "Qualified Community Providers", I once again asked for in-person support. At this point, my request is still be looked into (we are in the Turtle Lake Elementary/Mounds View School District.) My son is currently receiving only 20 minutes of one-on-one support. He is not able to follow along or complete tasks required of his Gen Ed class. If I leave him at the computer, he will close it and go about his preferred tasks of playing. I do not have the expertise to teach him nor the time to do so.

I also have a 2 year old with severe CP who relies on me 100% of the time, a 3 year old, a Kindergartner who is distance learning and a 7th grader also full time distance learning. I have been unable to find someone to employ to assist me during these difficult times. Without one-on-one in home support of a qualified professional, my son will be left to a wasted year of an education experience that he is not able to participate in and will continue to fall even further behind his peers.

I was really disappointed that our school would not provide in-home support for my son - even just 3 hours a day. I hired a tutor and paid for her out of my own pocket, but even that was not ideal because she was just a college grad looking for short term work - she had no experience teaching, let alone teaching a child with extra needs. My son currently gets anywhere from 1.5 hours to 2 hours of online para/SPED zoom calls a day and that is it. He does not do any of the Gen Ed classes because it was just too hard for him. It's been a difficult year for sure.

I'm so exhausted trying to fit in our 15 weekly therapies between my 2 special kiddos and distance learning has made it that much worse. I appreciate your leadership in championing this issue and thank you for support HF 965.

Sincerely

Jessica Slominski
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