



To Whom it may concern,

My name is [redacted] I live in Bristol; my son [redacted] attends [redacted] He is [redacted] and in the [redacted] I would like to share with you my experience in hope that I can get a better understanding in whether or not the district followed the appropriate protocol. I have included my recent independent neuropsychological evaluation, IEP and the letter I have sent to the Director of Pupil Services, Kim Hapkin.

My concerns started last school year when we were experiencing difficulties with my son [redacted]. As concerned parents, my husband and I were trying to do everything we could to help [redacted] be successful in school. As I was picking [redacted] up at school one day, I spoke with [redacted]'s teacher. She was having a difficult day with [redacted]. Recently I started going to a support group. They were discussing the benefits of a Neuropsychological Evaluation. Because this is all new to our family, I had decided to mention this to his teacher that day. I had asked her if it would be beneficial to have a Neuropsychological evaluation... to get a better understanding in what might be causing all the behaviors [redacted] was exhibiting?

Her response to me was, YES, it would be very helpful.

So after discussing it with my husband, we proceeded. When the evaluation was completed, I called for a PPT meeting to discuss the outcome and verify his new diagnosis. My husband and I were finally understanding [redacted]'s challenges, and was eager to share it with the school. When we did however, the school took the copy of the evaluation, and indicated at that time they were not going to change anything. They wanted to see what the next school year would be like for [redacted].

When I went back to the support group, they informed me that I needed an advocate, because protocol was not followed. What the school district failed to mention was.... whether they would or would not accept the evaluation, whether they agreed on the new diagnosis and whether they would help pay for the evaluation. They also mentioned that I needed to get an advocate to help me with that process. After submitting our claim for the evaluation with our insurance company, our share was still more than \$1700, which was an enormous financial hardship for our family.

Well needless to say.... after a couple of attempts and letters to see if the district would agree, we were told by Kim Hapkin that even though the teacher didn't properly inform us on the procedure or guide us to someone that could, the district did not do anything wrong.

We have since been trying to work with the school district to help provide an appropriate program for [REDACTED]. They did voluntarily take the recommendations and start speech and language services, OT services, and developed a behavioral plan. But they stayed with their original diagnosis of ADHD, and even though they believe that [REDACTED] "may exhibit some characteristics of the spectrum" they do not believe that it is effecting his educational performance. We feel if that was true, they would not have used any of the information or recommendations from his evaluation in developing an adequate learning environment for [REDACTED]

Even though I still receive complaints regarding transitions, staying on tasks and so on.... I would like the State Dept. To look into my concerns and let me know whether the school did or did not follow protocol.... if they started implementing recommendations regarding services for speech and language and OT services, and receiving input from the agency that is working with [REDACTED] outside of school. Does that mean that they agree with the "diagnosis" of the independent evaluation, and should that include that they change his diagnosis, and help in paying for the cost of the evaluation?

The question that I would like answered the most is this....

In the letter that was address to the bristol board of education to Ms. Hapkins, I had mentioned that at the PPT meetings I was given the procedural safeguards and was told here is your copy. Never did anyone say to me, " If you have any questions about it please let us know and we will explain" I had mentioned at the meeting that nobody ever sat down and explained what all that meant. It was only then I was told at the meeting with Ms. Hapkins, that if I had any questions I could ask. I indicated to her that it is very confusing for parents just starting out with this process.

Ms. Hapkins replied, it is right here on page..... well my question to the Bureau is that if parents "need to read and learn what all the procedurals mean? Then why is it that teachers are not trained to inform the parents how to follow the procedures when they innocently ask questions to the teachers?

They are the parents first responders to there children's education.... It seems that the parents have the burden to learn everything about special education all at once, but to not inform the parents of the proper protocol; they mislead the parent in what the procedures are, and the parents left hanging with the after effects.

Something has to change, we are suppose to work together for the well being of the student. Not to play games, and wait for the parent to "learn" what their child's rights are. You are the State Department of Education for CT... isn't it your responsibility to make sure the districts are following protocol. Not to wait until the parent complains. It is "What the parents don't know", that is continuing to hurt our Children.

Please contact me at [REDACTED] if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]