Education & Early Learning for Students with Developmental Disabilities

Education in the time of COVID-19 has been challenging for students with developmental disabilities (DD). Having virtual classrooms and assignments, no access to therapies, peers and other supports have made this a frustrating time. Children with DD who lose their routine struggle to cope and parents with no training in special education are expected to deal with all the behaviors that come with losing that routine and try to figure out how to stop the inevitable regression.

There are some bills and budget items going through the legislative process that could support students with DD and their families. Please implement these critical budget and policy changes:

The ability of many schools and districts to provide transition services was interrupted by COVID-19 last year and is still an ongoing concern for some students.

Solution: OSPI requests that the legislature provide up to $12 million per year for the biennium (2021-23), to extend transition services to students with disabilities who:

- Turned age 21 during the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years,
- Did not graduate with a regular diploma, and
- Require recovery services on or after July 1, 2021 as determined by the IEP team.

Other OSPI Budget Requests:
- Expanding Inclusive Teaching Practices
- Supporting Students through Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Supporting Families with a Special Education Family Liaison
- Building Staff Capacity to Support Student Well-Being
- Closing Gaps in Access to Learning Devices and Connectivity

### Education Bills of Interest to Students with DD and their Families

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<td>SB 5376</td>
<td>Promote Office of Education Ombuds (OEO)</td>
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Please Ensure Needs are Met for Students with Developmental Disabilities!

Contact The Arc of Washington for more information (888) 754-8798
Special Education during COVID

Transition to work
We are using a remote learning model which keeps students safe during this time of pandemic. Yet, the recipients of transition services are not getting any benefit from the current remote model. Being engaged in school is more than checking in. For transition students, a hands-on job exploration and search occurs in the last year of school. In this program, students learn the skills they need to leave school with an appropriate job. Furthermore, many of these students are looking for clerical and essential jobs which can be only done in person. An extra year would mean that they can take advantage of these skill building opportunities. A successful school-to-work program should have opportunities for in-person training. This has not happened under COVID restrictions. We need to encourage that state and federal government should support this.

Challenges of distance learning
When the pandemic hit, transition services could not provide one-on-one services to students exiting the school system at twenty-one. This program is a partnership between DVR and local school districts ensuring that people will get the training they need to leave school with a job. These services haven’t been delivered successfully from a distance so another year of school after the pandemic would be greatly appreciated. SAIL supports the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) request for $12 million for transition students to extend their transition service for additional year and the $10 million for Transition Graduates to get a Basic Plus waiver.

Purposed temporary expanded services
If people on a student’s IEP team believe that an extra year could benefit the student, those who would have graduated this year could participate next year. SAIL supports this as the skills and connections made to employment services would provide these students a meaningful pathway to jobs that fit their abilities and strengths.

Other news
Youth living in or being released from institutional settings deserve a chance at a quality education. HB1295 would enable those in these settings to get a meaningful diploma which would prepare them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship. While SAIL believes that children shouldn’t be institutionalized, we support how this bill would give these people a path towards a meaningful life.

Tell Your Story
Legislators need to hear from you. Self advocates know what is needed and what supports work, if we don’t share the information, legislators cannot make informed decisions. Join SAIL today to let your voice be heard. Nothing About Us Without Us!!! Next Zoom meeting is March 9th at 1:00 p.m. https://zoom.us/j/808138909

Prepared by Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)