

November 29, 2017

RE: CSA and Inclusion

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Sean Campbell. I have been employed in the public education realm for 16 years. The past 4 years I have served as a data/accountability specialist. This letter is being written from the perspective as a father. My son was in alternative day setting for 4 and ½ years. I can honestly say that our family has toured most of the alternative day schools in central Virginia. From our experiences, we learned there are three major issues surrounding alternative day placements and the utilization of CSA funds.

The first, is the lack of transparency regarding the academic outcomes for students in alternate day settings. Within minutes, I can locate the SOL pass rates for any school and any subgroup within any county in Virginia. When it comes to Alternate day settings,

1. VDOE refuses to publically release any of the aggregated scores.
2. VDOE also refuses to post the graduation rates of these children
3. VDOE refuses to collect the number of incidents involving restraints and seclusion

It is vital that any educational system know the academic progress of the children they serve. Knowing this information assists private day placements in conducting strand analyses and evaluating/improving their own educational programs. Knowing graduation rates also helps private day settings determine how many verified credits are needed and it helps those entities tailor educational programs for their students.

In my own line of work, I suspect a significant achievement gap between children in alternative day settings and any other subgroup. Speaking as a father, my own son failed his SOL tests when was attending an alternate day school. My son has an IQ that has been classified as "superior", yet when conducting a strand analysis on him, I could easily see where chunks of material was never introduced to him in school.

The second issue concerns the Standards of Quality or SOQs. The SOQs require public schools to maintain a certain level of staffing. Alternative day settings are not bound to any of the SOQs which translates as follows:

1. Students are not guaranteed access to highly qualified teachers. At best some of my son's teachers were provisionally licensed; however, most had high school diplomas and did not possess a college degree.
2. Students may not have access to a school nurse. My son had a medical plan for his hypoglycemia, yet the alternative day schools that he attended did not provide him access to a school nurse.
3. Students do not access to librarians, much less access to libraries or books. Over the course of three years, my son as a 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grader never had the ability to check out

a book from his school's library and he never learned how to use reference materials (which happens to be a 3rd grade SOL).

4. Students do not have access to a gym and some schools do not even have a playground. My son often had to go off campus to access playground equipment and these visits were rare and infrequent.

In addition to lacking SOQs, my son never had a yearbook and never had the opportunity to participate in a school-wide club.

The third issue I would to briefly discuss concerns the lack of checks and balances between the local educational agencies and the Office of Children's Services. From 2009 until 2016, the number of students enrolled in a private setting via CSA funds increased over 75%. Last year, Virginia spent approximately \$120 Million dollars in tuition costs for 2569 students. This equates to about \$44,000 per student when the state average per pupil was about \$11,500 (almost ¼ the cost).

It is my belief that school systems are eager to refer 'difficult students' to alternative day settings as a matter of convenience. In my son's case, our local school system was more than willing to pay \$100,000+ per year to send him outside our community. Each time I asked the school system to integrate back into his home school, I was told 'no.'

However, when I learned that I could revoke my son's academic records from the CSA coordinator, the school system became much more interested in working with us to integrate him back into the local school.

§ 2.2-5209 in the Code of Virginia (and FERPA) allows parents the right to revoke their children's academic records from the CSA Coordinator. When those records are revoked, the child is no longer able to receive CSA funds. In our case, when I mentioned revoking my son's records, the school system did not want to pay for the \$100,000+ tuition and decided it was much easier to include him back into his local school. Today, my son has been back in public school system for 2 years. He has all two Bs and the rest As and is in all honor's and advanced classes.

Speaking as a parent, inclusion works. I am not advocating to shut down alternative day settings, but I am asking you all to really concentrate on those three things:

1. More transparency
2. Better services
3. Improved checks and balances

Thank you,



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Fiscal Year (Quarter 3)/Trend Year	# of Students with Disabilities Served in Alternate Day Settings ¹	Trend of Students with Disabilities Served in Alternate Day Settings (%)	Total Cost to Fund Alternate Day Placements for Special Education Students ¹	Trend of the Total Cost to Fund Alternate Day Placements for Special Education Students (%)	Per Pupil Cost for Special Students in an Alternate Day Placement ¹	Trend of the Per Pupil Cost for Special Students in an Alternate Day Placement (%)
2017/Trend Year 8	3685	79.5%	\$ 117,483,722	72.0%	\$ 32,770.91	-4.2%
2016/Trend Year 7	2669	28.6%	\$ 119,640,903	75.2%	\$ 46,571.00	36.2%
2015/Trend Year 6	2398	20.1%	\$ 108,954,037	69.5%	\$ 45,435.38	32.8%
2014/Trend Year 5	2209	10.6%	\$ 96,489,902	41.3%	\$ 43,680.35	27.7%
2013/Trend Year 4	2086	4.5%	\$ 94,938,098	39.0%	\$ 45,512.03	33.1%
2012/Trend Year 3	2047	2.5%	\$ 79,470,933	16.4%	\$ 38,823.12	13.5%
2011/Trend Year 2	2018	1.1%	\$ 74,762,141	9.4%	\$ 37,042.69	8.3%
2010/Trend Year 1	1937	-3.0%	\$ 68,619,478	0.5%	\$ 35,425.65	3.6%
2009/Baseline	1987	BASELINE	\$ 89,300,896	BASELINE	\$ 34,201.75	BASELINE
Fiscal Year (Quarter 3)/Trend Year	Total # Students with Disabilities in Virginia ²	Trend of the Total # Students with Disabilities in Virginia (%)	% of Students with Disabilities in Virginia being Served in an Alternate Day Setting	Trend of Students with Disabilities in Virginia being Served in an Alternate Day Setting	Per Pupil Cost for Special Students in Virginia ^{3,4}	Trend of the Per Pupil Cost for Special Students in an Alternate Day Placement (%)
2017/Trend Year 8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2016/Trend Year 7	168,943	2.4%	2,122%	80.8%	\$ 11,745.00	3.8%
2015/Trend Year 6	165,777	0.5%	1,590%	32.0%	\$ 11,523.00	1.8%
2014/Trend Year 5	163,270	-1.1%	1,469%	25.1%	\$ 11,242.00	-0.7%
2013/Trend Year 4	162,187	-1.7%	1,362%	16.0%	\$ 11,257.00	-0.5%
2012/Trend Year 3	162,617	-1.5%	1,283%	9.3%	\$ 10,969.00	-3.1%
2011/Trend Year 2	162,649	-1.4%	1,259%	7.2%	\$ 10,793.00	-4.6%
2010/Trend Year 1	163,500	-0.9%	1,234%	5.2%	\$ 11,020.00	-2.6%
2009/Baseline	165,029	BASELINE	1,174%	BASELINE	\$ 11,316.00	BASELINE

¹ Data collected from CSA (2017), <http://csa.virginia.gov/OCSReports/Reports/DatasetReports.aspx>

² Data collected from Virginia Department of Education (2017a), http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/child_count/

³ http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/budget/index.shtml

⁴ http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/supts_annual_report/index.shtml

Please note that data from CSA only extends to 2009

Table

Seven Year Trend Data: Comparison of the % Increase of Children with Disabilities Placed in Private Day Settings (via CSA) versus the % Increase of All Children Identified with a Disability in the State of Virginia - Starting from a 2009 Baseline and Continuing to 2016

