June 3, 2008

Special Education Regulations Revision Process
Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services
Virginia Department of Education
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218

Re: Regulation Revision for Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities

To Whom It May Concern:

I strongly believe Virginia is the best state in the nation to raise a child because of the hard work of educators and supporters across Virginia.

I write today with great concern about the proposed revision of regulations regarding special education programs for children with disabilities. I fear it will fundamentally change the special education system, endanger parental involvement and harm our ability to help the students who need our help the most.

As the parent of two young children, I worry greatly about any regulatory change that removes, limits, or in any way curtails parental involvement. Education is a partnership between schools and parents - we cannot have full parental partners if we do not allow parents to be involved at every stage of their children's education.

As good-intentioned and motivated as they may be, the proposals to eliminate the Child Study Committees, raise criteria for student eligibility, and deny parental requests for IEP team meetings are of great concern to many in my district and across the Commonwealth.

Of greatest concern, however, is the proposal to partially or completely terminate special education services without parental consent. The service termination process should be open, participatory, and clearly defined, so that parents have as much involvement as possible. That involvement has been a bedrock of our system here in Virginia and one, I believe, has contributed to all the successes we have had.
While I have no doubt that our rules need to be updated and regulations revised, I am very skeptical of any changes that diminish long-standing parental rights, protections and procedures in special education.

I am, therefore, asking the proposed regulations be revised to address these concerns which have been raised by parents across the Commonwealth.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I appreciate our shared commitment to helping maintain Virginia’s quality and excellence in the education of our children.

Sincerely,

Brian Moran

Cc: Governor Tim Kaine
Dr. Billy K. Cannaday Jr., Superintendent of Public Instruction
Jamie Trosclair, The ARC
Laurie Kusek, The ARC of Northern Virginia
Melissa Nehrbass, Virginia PTA
Jane Brooks, Virginia PTA
Marion Akins, Virginia PTA