



Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Cherrie Reynolds. I drove from Atchison to support HB 2444. I want to tell you why these regulations are so important.

My adopted son, Jacob, is 16. He is halfway through his first year of high school at Atchison High School. We are very proud that he is in this school. Jacob has physical and mental health and developmental problems. He has a pacemaker and is diagnosed with Asperger's and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Several years ago, Jacob was the victim of repeated seclusions and restraint that were delivered by untrained people. He was constantly restrained. They did not believe me when I said he had a pacemaker and manhandling him could kill him. In fact he had to do all his work from a closet. One day a substitute put her hands on him. She had never seen his IEP that said under no circumstances should he be touched. She had no training to work with him. She got hurt. He went to the Atchison County Jail, at the age of 9. His wonderful probation officer helped us. We found a residential placement for him at Marillac. They helped us.

Marillac staff worked closely with Atchison, USD 409. Under the capable direction of Dr. David Meyers, Special Education Director, Marillac staff led by Annie Erickson (his therapist) and Dr. Cooley from Wyandot Mental Health Center, Jacob is now on grade level and is in real school all day. He has been on the honor roll for two years.

This was a long and expensive process. We had to threaten due process before the school would recognize that his behaviors and his inability to learn were a direct result of his disabilities.

Marillac staff met with the school staff. Atchison staff visited the program at Marillac to learn how to work with Jacob. We developed a shared IEP. Slowly we transitioned him home for half days, then whole days with some refresher days. We developed a meaningful, long Individual Education Program, used functional behavioral assessment to write a behavior intervention plan and Marillac trained us all in how to use it. We needed the guidelines and we used them. In our case they worked.

A lot of money would have been saved had we had regulations so this could be done right the first time. I like many parents was afraid and unable to challenge the district without the help of advocates at Keys for Networking. I did not even know I could. I was told he could not and should not ever be in public school.

I am here to ask you to pass this bill so that regulations will protect teachers and students. I now serve on the Board of Directors for Keys for Networking, I have taken calls and helped other parents through this process. We really need help to help our children. We need regulations. Thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of this bill.