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My name is Ivy Goldstein and I am the parent of 2 children who receive Special Education services. I am here to voice my strong support for Senate Bill 840.

This past year I observed my daughter Sophie's life skills classes on multiple occasions. I'm deeply concerned that because of her placement in life skills and her disability label, the bar for her at school in terms of their expectations for learning and academics is set dismally low.

From my observations her teacher and aides *do not* have adequate training in research-based strategies and best practices-- and they need it desperately.

On one occasion I, along with a Coordinator from our district, observed a Math Class. First, the 8 students all participated in a group activity that was dull, meaningless, and is repeated nearly every day for the three years those kids are in middle school. Many of the students were squirming in their seats and bored to tears. So was I.

In general, my daughter's teachers and aides are not proficient with her communication device and do not know how to plan activities ahead of time so she can maximize its use. One of her aides happens to be of foreign descent. Her English can barely be understood. Why is a para who cannot speak clear English working with kids with significant learning and language challenges?

From the beginning of the school year I have approached the school with my concerns and suggestions. I understand the strains on the system and have offered to help plan activities that would be meaningful to my daughter and save precious time for the teacher. I've struggled to get the school to even consider new ideas on how to best teach Sophie and integrate her into the

Every day that goes by with teachers and paras who are not highly skilled and do not individualize instruction in meaningful ways for students is another day our students are left behind.

I urge you to support and fully fund SB 840.

Thank you. I'll be happy to answer any questions.