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From: tblades@dsasa.org
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2008 10:48 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Texas Senate Hearing on Public Education

On behalf of the Down Syndrome Association of San Antonio and as a parent of a 23 year old adult daughter with Down syndrome, I would like to submit a statement for the Senate Education Committee's public hearing on June 23, 2008.

Children with special needs in the Special Education program in Texas are not prepared for life outside of school as adults. Unlike typical students in high school, there is a lack of focus on the goals and post secondary education opportunities for the special needs high school students.

My daughter attended high school until age 19 and received the minimum required academic training and was then transferred to the school district's transition system to receive job and life skills training. She was able to find a job in the food service industry and graduated at the maximum age of 22. At 23, she still has the same job, lives at home and reads at a fourth grade level, she does not write well, she has no math skills, and cannot count money. If she had had a focused academic plan in high school rather than a life skills plan, she may have advanced more in her reading, writing and math skills.

As the Executive Director for the Down Syndrome Association of San Antonio, I am also aware of many other children in elementary and middle school that are delayed in their reading, writing and math skills. I believe that there needs to be more focus on opportunities available to advance these skills at an earlier age to help prepare students as they enter high school and other possible post secondary education opportunities.

I am available to discuss this further if possible.

Thank you,

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