

From: Chairman for the Commission for Persons with Disabilities Town of Winchester

To: All interested parties concerning Special Education in the State of Connecticut

1. Enclosed you will find various letters that were handed out to the Winchester Board of Education Town of Winchester since January 2014. You also will be given a copy of the report from CREC which was done in November 2014.
2. The documents and CREC Report show that the Special Education in the Town of Winchester is non-existent, there is NO transitional program for children age 14 and above for the last three years. That there is NO accounting of the Special Education funding from the State and Federal Government and many other problems found.
3. Thomas Danehy was hired as superintendent in 2011. Under his supervision the special needs children were denied their rights, lost educational time, families harassed and caused undo stress. In 2012 he had 22 complaints, 6 hearing and 7 due processes filed against him. He lost them all in that the state BOE ruled in favor of the families, and hearing and due processes were settled in the families favor.
4. In February 2014 the Board attorney Mark Samarogra and the director of Pupil Services Ania Czajkowski gave a report to the Board that was NOT factual and not fully reported or complete by order of Thomas Danehy, as reported to a couple of families by Ania.
5. A copy of the Office of Civil Rights Complaint is enclosed that I filed in May 2014. I spoke with the investigator today. The letter that is being sent to the district is awaiting a signature by the Office of Civil Rights, Boston. They are afraid of retaliation against their child if they have their names mentioned publicly. Some of the families are here tonight to speak to you as they can no longer wait for proper education for their child.
6. On October 15th the Gilbert School sent a letter to the State Department of Education (Ms. Charlene Russell Tucker) and I sent her a letter on October 17th requesting the removal of the Board Chairwomen Susan Hoffnagle and 5 other members. At the Gilbert Board meeting she stated that she had no idea of what was going on with Special Education. What kind of a Chairwomen is she?
7. The violations that Thomas Danehy, Ania Czajkowski, Nadine Savage, Lori Eagan, and Rainy Deitz (WISE Program teacher) to the Special needs children in

Winchester and their families, justifies the REMOVAL of their certifications. To single out disabled children is a sign of a coward, as they cannot protect themselves. This problem is happening throughout the state in certain districts.

8. Ms Russell Tucker in June wanted me to meet with her and a attorney in Hartford. My reply is included in the packet. Her reply to it was seeing that there was an Office of Civil Rights investigation going on we shouldn't meet at this time.

9. I believe the State of Connecticut has been PROTECTING Thomas Danehy and his gang and the Board of Education in this matter as also 1 year has gone by yet nothing has been. How much more evidence is needed against this gang? The October 15 and 17 letters has had nothing done about it, almost two months with documenting evidence. The Gilbert School needs to take over Special Education in the Town of Winchester, as the Winchester BOE and school officials cannot do it properly and in accordance with State and Federal laws.

10. What can the legislature do about this? Pass legislature that is very strict, holding BOE's, superintendents and teachers accountable. At present there is none. People get a slap on the wrist. Remove legislation that has the Town BOE to pay for legal defense of people who violate the law, that are making more than enough money to pay for their own lawyer.

Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight in hopes that the future of special needs children improves for the better and people are accountable for there actions and penalties ARE IMPOSED.

For God and Country


Arthur W. Melycher, Chairman

Arthur Melycher
24 Moore Avenue
Winsted, Ct. 06098

January 8, 2014

Business Manager
Winchester School District
Winsted, Ct. 06098

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Dear Sir or Madam:

The purpose of this letter is to request information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. section 552.

The information requested is as follows:

Fees paid for the last 3 years 2013, 2012, and 2011 to the Board of Education Attorney. Broken down as follows: Fees paid for attending PPT's, Fee's for executive session, and fees in general. Copies of the legal bills.

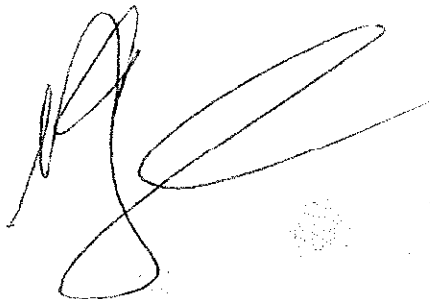
I expect this information request within two weeks as required by law.

Respectfully,


Arthur Melycher

Copy to:
State of Connecticut

Received on
1/8/2013
me



From: "Cheryl Bartley" <cherylbartleydesigns@yahoo.com>
To: nuconceptshome@charter.net
Date: 01/14/2014 04:27:03 EST
Subject: Fwd: FYI Special Education

Cheryl Bartley
8608061931

Begin forwarded message:

From: James Roberts <jroberts254@charter.net>
Date: January 11, 2014 at 6:23:58 PM EST
To: Cheryl Bartley <cherylbartleydesigns@yahoo.com>
Subject: Fwd: FYI Special Education

Begin forwarded message:

37A-0236
From: James Roberts <jroberts254@charter.net>
Subject: Special Education
Date: January 11, 2014 6:14:59 PM EST
To: Susan Hoffnagle <susan_hoffnagle@yahoo.com>, Thomas Danehy <thomas.danehy@winchesterschools.org>
Cc: Monique Abreu <moniqueabreu726@gmail.com>, CarolCox3@aol.com, Ray Rabago <rayrabago91@yahoo.com>, Christine Royer <estimating@markalfinishing.com>, Brian Shaughnessy <b-shaughnessy@hotmail.com>, Theresa Starzyk <theresa.starzyk@winchesterschools.org>, Mimi Valyo <iosvalyos@gmail.com>

Given the rash of community special education concerns raised by three separate BoE email threads this week, I suggest we add to the agenda for Tuesday a new business item that

- (1) provides Tom with the opportunity on a no-names basis to provide some background on all three issues, and any other brewing controversies that we may be unaware of
- (2) instructs Tom to conduct an audit of our Special Education process, including a review of (a) our completeness and timeliness in achieving legally mandated procedures, (b) our ability and record in monitoring/achieving the effectiveness of our service offering, and (c) complaint and complaint resolution data, and
- (3) affirms our commitment (by resolution, motion or however otherwise appropriate) as the BoE, and our explicit direction to Tom + staff, to the delivery of special education services appropriate under law/administrative regulation and in full pursuit of our own policies and mission.

I hope this is not a controversial request. On the off-chance that it is, I would ask that

Who said
administrator
PPT,
Mary Jean said
super can appoint
anybody he
wants,
they say it must
be an administrator
designator

BoE members in support of this indicate their support to Susan/Tom by email.

thnks

james

State of Connecticut
Department of Education
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, Ct. 06145
Attn: Gail Mangs

16 January 2014

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Dear Ms. Mangs:

The purpose of this letter is to request information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. section 532.

The information requested for the calendar years of 2012 and 2013 is as follows:

How many complaints were filed against the Winchester School system?
How many resulted in state findings of violation?
What were the violations?
How many were due process?
How many were mediation?
How many were repeat violations, because the district didn't follow state orders or recommendations?

Respectfully,



Arthur Melycher
Chairman Commission for Persons with Disabilities
24 Moore Avenue
Winsted, Ct. 06098

Copy to:
State Representative Jay Case
Commissioner John Slifka,

State of Connecticut
Department of Education
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, Ct. 06145
Attn: Gail Mangs

16 January 2014

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Dear Ms. Mangs:

The purpose of this letter is to request information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. section 532.

The information requested for the calendar years of 2012 and 2013 is as follows:

How many complaints were filed against the Winchester School system?
How many resulted in state findings of violation?
What were the violations?
How many were due process?
How many were mediation?
How many were repeat violations, because the district didn't follow state orders or recommendations?

Respectfully,



Arthur Melycher

Chairman Commission for Persons with Disabilities
24 Moore Avenue
Winsted, Ct. 06098

Copy to:
State Representative Jay Case
Commissioner John Slifka,

Office of Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Education, 8th Floor

5 Post Office Square

Boston, MA. 02109

To whom it may concern:

7 MAY 2014

1. My name is Arthur Melycher and I have served as the Chairman for the Committee for Persons with Disabilities in the town of Winchester, Connecticut from 1994 to present and I have served on the commission since 1989.

Since January 2014, and especially over the past month, I have been approached by numerous parents who have disabled children in the Winchester School District as well as numerous professionals that work in the Winchester School District.

These parents, grandparents and school professionals, claim disabled students served by the Winchester School System are being denied their rights under State and Federal education laws.

2. I have been asked by the families of these disabled students and professionals who work/worked in the district to file a formal complaint with the Office of Civil Rights on their behalf.

From what I have been told, I believe that the Winchester School District, under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Danchy and its current Board of Education, has systematically set out to discriminate against students with disabilities and their right to FAPE, ADA, IDEA and 504.

3. I believe the state and federal rights of disabled students are broadly described

- **Programs and activities receiving financial assistance from HHS 45 CFR 84.**
- **Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services.**
- **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 USC § 794) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.**

Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance"

OCR enforces Section 504 in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance

and Winchester Public School falls within these guidelines. The regulations implementing Section 504 in the context of educational institutions appear at 34 C.F.R. Part 104.

The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.

The first complaint that I am requesting to be investigated by OCR on behalf of disabled students and families in our district is the districts systematic and intentional failure to comply with those students federal rights. This campaign is led by the Superintendent of Schools who, by his behavior, shows his utter and total contempt for federal and state laws related to disabled students.. Specifically,

1. Not having processes to identify students with specific learning disabilities. The Superintendent of Schools is personally responsible for providing this service, yet families have described in detail to me how he personally sought to limit and reduce services to special needs students, especially when a family tried to stand up for the rights of their children.
2. Denying services to students with specific learning disabilities.
3. Using discipline as the approach to special needs children, as opposed to providing these students services consistent with an IEP or 504 plans.
4. Denying evaluation and reevaluation for special needs students, resulting in students failing to receive needed services.
4. Falsifying and altering students IEP records.
5. Failure to monitor service providers by failing to write contracts with services providers and then using the lack of a contract to deny payments.
6. Denying payment to service providers and denying payment of late fees to providers.
7. Denying reimbursement to parents who provide transportation on behalf of the district.
8. Failing to fund and hire qualified personnel to provide services.
9. Denying parents the right to invite representatives and service providers to PPT meetings.
11. Failure to provide legally mandated transition planning for eligible disabled students.
12. Failing to make IEP's accessible to service providers and others responsible for its Implementation.

13. Interference, by the Superintendent of Schools, with the district's Special Education Director resulting in PPT or state mediated negotiated services being denied students. This interference is seen by many parents as harassment and bullying of the Special Education Director, thus creating for her a hostile work environment. The Special Education Director/PPS Director often cries openly in PPT meetings as she knows the rights of students will be denied when the Superintendent edits the PPTs.
14. The Superintendent's harassment results in inappropriate and unprofessional conduct at/or prior to commencement of PPTs by the Special Education Director. This results in confusion, stress, and pressure on to families and guardians during PPTs. I attended a recent investigation by the State Department of Special Education that a parent of a disabled student requested; the investigator offered the services of IEP facilitator in order to ensure that the PPT is run in accordance with the law.
15. Misleading and simply lying to the Board of Education regarding matters of disabled rights and various complaints by parents and guardians. This includes misrepresentation by the Attorney for BOE that complaints filed by special needs families are minor and indeed frivolous. This then results in Emails from the Board of Education Chairman to others that disabled students families file false and frivolous complaints. The Superintendent also has misled the community at large by giving false information regarding State investigation of a complaint file by a guardian on behalf of their disabled child to newspaper media. I have documentation.
16. Giving a parent who provides transportation to her disabled children a 1099 for reimbursement of travel costs that were approved per an IEP and/or agreement.
17. Intimidation and discriminating against an individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Section 504.
18. Public elementary and secondary recipients of Federal funding such as Winchester School district are required to provide a free appropriate public education to qualified students with disabilities. Such an education consists of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met.
19. The Winchester Board of Education is required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in a school's program. Recipients are not required to make adjustments or provide aids or services that would result in a fundamental alteration of a recipient's program or impose an undue burden.
20. The Districts recent failure to report an injury that a disabled child received at school. They are mandated reporters and must follow this law, however they did not.

School Employees - as stated in section 53a-65 (subsection 13) of Connecticut Statutes "School

employee" means: (A) A teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or a private elementary, middle or high school or working in a public or private elementary, middle or high school; or (B) any other person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in (i) a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education, or (ii) a private elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the supervisory agent of such private school.

21. The Superintendent of the Winchester Schools is sending personnel to PPT's, who don't have the authority to commit to any services or testing that the child needs or what the parent would want for testing, therefore no agreement can be reached.
22. The Superintendent of the Winchester Schools isn't providing services or materials needed to the Special needs students at the Gilbert School. The students in grades 7 – 12 that are Students with Disabilities are under the control of the Superintendent of the Winchester Schools and not the Gilbert School. This was told to myself and two new Board of Education members at a meeting at the Gilbert School.
23. Our local State Representative Jay Case has been trying to find out what has happened to an investigation with the Department of Children and Families concerning a Disabled child that was injured because of the Superintendent. The Department of Children and Families talked to the parent told them they were going to investigate it and only talked to the Superintendent not the child or the parents. The State Representative also believes he is being protected by the Commissioner of Education, State of Connecticut.

The second complaint that I am requesting be investigated by OCR on behalf of disabled students and families in our district is the handling of complaints from parents and guardians by the State of Connecticut Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education and whether the State Department of Special Education handled those complaints in a full and fair manner in accordance with State and Federal education laws.

Many parents and guardians have complained to me that they do not believe the State Department of Education acted in a manner consistent with law; that facts have been ignored with which were needed to reach rulings. This resulted in hearing summaries that were incomplete resulting in further discrimination against the disabled students by the State Department of Special Education, the current Superintendent Dr. Thomas Danehy, his administration, and the Winchester Board of Education.

In closing, I have been asked by the parents of disabled students, their guardians and professionals within the school district to request a full investigation of the State Department of Education handling of complaints that have been filed on behalf of their disabled children as well as the denial of rights by the Winchester Board of a Education and it's administration. I do have some documentation and a list of parent, guardians and other professionals that are willingly to come forward and speak with an OCR investigator should you chose to investigate this matter. I would also request that the 6 month timeline

be extended as this has been happening to these families for two years and I am only just becoming aware of it


Arthur Melycher

(860)307-5103

Chairman for Commission for Persons with Disabilities

24 Moore Ave.

Winsted, CT. 06098

From: nuconceptshome@charter.net
To: Anthony.Cruthird@ed.gov
Cc: Jay.Case@housegop.ct.gov, Stefan.Pryor@ct.gov, Gail.Mangs@ct.gov, Pamela.charland@ct.gov, thomas.danehy@winchesterschoole.org, ania.czajkowski@winchesterschools.org, marymclane88@yahoo.com
Date: 06/02/2014 11:47:05 EDT
Subject: Winchester School District

Attorney Cruhird:

Below is listed the newest problem here in the Winchester School District which can be listed as item 26 in the complaint number 01-14-116.

On April 15th 2014 a PPT was held at the Pearson School for student Michael G.. It was agreed upon by the team and the family that a follow up PPT would be held on June 3rd at 10am at the Pearson School. This was documented by the guardian, mother and an outside counselor from LARC of Torrington.

In an attempt to confirm the PPT(since no PPT notice was ever sent) it was discovered that the district did not schedule the meeting after all and I believe this is not only a violation of the guardian who is disabled (the district is well aware of her disability) and needs to make extensive plans to attend such meetings, but also a willful and deliberate attempt by the district to ignore the family's request for a PPT, so that the district can graduate Michael against the family's wishes so that the district has no further financial obligation to him. The guardian called all day to the Superintendent, Ania's office and the school principal. The principal called her back at 3:30pm to inform her there was no PPT scheduled.

No other reason could be determined as to why the district will not hold a PPT as soon as possible so we must assume that it is being done to get Michael out of the district and therefore making the district no longer financially obligated to provide services to him.

Without a doubt Michael is NO WHERE ready to graduate, this must be known for the record, he is NOT ready at all to graduate and the family disagree's with ANY attempts to pursue graduation. Michael is in dire need of a significant increase in services and programming so that he can learn the skills necessary to eventually graduate at age 21, services, which I and the family must state should have been given this past year.

He has been inappropriately placed in the WISE Program in the Winchester School District against the family's wishes. In doing so he has lost the skills he previously had from another school district. Had he been appropriately placed, perhaps Michael would have made more measurable gains and not a loss of skills.

Additionally, Michael's IEP arrived extremely late, some 26 days after the PPT, delivered most inappropriately on Mother's Day (a Sunday) unannounced. In this IEP, many errors were found to include but not limited to, the omission by the district that they offered Michael a summer programming at LARC. In the meeting for June 3rd there were 2 other state agencies coming to the PPT, unknown to the district, they are going to be very upset.

The violations here are systematic and unending and need immediate investigating and compensatory programming needs to be awarded.

Please Attorney Cruthird we need an immediate investigation into the WISE Program, as I have been told the students in that program are considering drastic measures. Please call me concerning this matter. This is another family to add to the list.

For God and Country

Arthur Melycher, Chairmen for the
Commission for Persons with Disabilities

June 17th, 2014

Stefan Pryor,
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford CT 06106

Dear Commissioner Pryor,

We write to you today regarding the Winchester Public School's blatant disregard for the laws both State and Federal as they pertain to the education of disabled/special needs students.

It is our belief that the Superintendent Thomas Danehy and the Winchester Board of Education knowingly and willingly violate the rights of its students and as a public school receiving both State and Federal funding are not adhering to the laws in place and are not using their funding to provide appropriate programs to their most vulnerable populations.

We hereby implore you to grant us the same rights as citizens and residents of Winchester CT as those bestowed upon our towns board and initiate a 10-4b inquiry into the education and programs and services and the funding of such so that our children, our students, will no longer be harmed by the Superintendent, Thomas Danehy and The Winchester Board of Education.

Pursuant to section 10-4b of the Connecticut General Statutes ("C.G.S") the Superintendent and the Winchester Board of Education are not upholding the educational interests of it's disabled populations and we request an inquiry before more violations and harm occur.

July 2014

My name is Art Melycher and I am Chairman of the Persons with Disability Commission of this Town. For months I have appeared before you and requested that you fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities act, particularly as noted previously regarding special education children in this district.

I have, without result, cautioned you as to what might result in such matters, where this board has turned a deaf ear to such concerns of these children and their families. This panel supervises one employee, the Superintendent of Schools.

That employee has over the course of years engaged in conduct which is outside reasonable expectation of an educator, regarding in particular special education classified children which has been supported over said period by this panel. His apparent overriding interest regarding these children was fiscal in nature, not their education.

I have attempted to bring this panel into reasonable compliance with generally accepted practices required to support such children and granting them a safe, equidable public education, which is their right and those of their parents.

I remind you of the oath you swore to assume your office upon this panel, to protect these children, which in my opinion, you have completely failed in.

My question of such a failure was its' source and there are 3 choices.

1: You have failed to understand the meaning and nature of your oath and have acted outside the scope of your office.

2: You have failed to supervise your employee, the Superintendent of Schools, in his execution of your direction or that of the State Board of Education. Further, by error or intentional act, you have failed to supervise fiscal control of the funds placed in your control and supervision, assigned issued or allocated to special

educational classified students and their support, together with records related to such activity.

3: You as a body and more purposely as individuals have acted in a manner as to breach the public trust, by virtue of communications between members, creating a quorum, outside the public view or knowledge, conducting public business, in secret, as to further the denial of students to their rightful education.

Further, said conduct is outside the scope of your office, breaching state FOI statutes, your by-laws, your oath of office and engaging in petty politics in the furtherance of the state office you hold, places you in individual peril, outside any indemnification as a public officer.

As you are aware, I have shepherded several complaints to the Office of Civil Rights, which are under review regarding the activity of this board and employees. I shall not stop protecting children and their families.

Your attention should be directed to U.S.C 42. regarding the deprivation of civil rights as your claim to holding a state office offers you no protection, while acting outside the scope of your office or allowing your employees to do the same.

GILBERT

1895

THE GILBERT SCHOOL™

www.gilbertschool.org

200 Williams Avenue, Winsted, Connecticut 06098-1190
Phone (860) 379-8521 • Fax (860) 379-6163
www.gilbertschool.org

Anthony Serio, Ed. D., Head of School/Superintendent
Alan J. Strauss, Principal

October 15, 2014

Ms. Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer
State of Connecticut Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106-1630

Dear Ms. Russell Tucker:

I am Anthony Serio, Head of School/Superintendent of The Gilbert School. We are one of the three Independent Town Academies in the State of Connecticut serving a public mission by educating the secondary age children of the towns that designate us to serve this purpose. In our case, the Winchester Board of Education ("WBOE") has a signed agreement (contract) with us to service their secondary age students in grades seven through twelve. In addition, there is a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the WBOE will administer special education to our Gilbert students who are in need of services. The services that the WBOE has been providing are less than adequate on many levels, and they present continued violations of the students' individual educational plans ("IEP's") due to the omission of prescribed services and personnel to implement these IEP's. As you know, I am somewhat restricted in sharing names in this correspondence but I will refer to the cases in general terms as you investigate this complaint of the various violations of State Statutes and PL 94-142 retitled as IDEA. I will also refer to State Statutes on Special Education 10-76o and 10-76g.

First, let me point out the WBOE's general violations of IEPs caused by personnel shortages especially in the use of teacher assistants (TA) or paraprofessionals necessary to carry out 1:1 1:2 services or small group/classroom aid to special needs students. We are presently short one special education teacher due to a resignation of a WBOE employee during the summer. Despite our numerous requests to the WBOE to fill the position and our attempts to supply names of qualified teachers, the administration of the WBOE claims no qualified staff is available. As a result, one certified high school special education teacher is managing forty-three cases along with a substitute who is not certified in special education. We have numerous cases of students not having the 1:1/1:2 or classroom aides to accompany them in the mainstream or inclusionary classes. We had seven teachers and eleven paraprofessionals/TAs last year to service our special education population assigned to The Gilbert School by the WBOE. This year we have five qualified special education teachers and ten paraprofessionals/TAs assigned to us. We have enrolled additional ID students with IEPs calling for 1:1 aide. The reduction in personnel resources for 1:1 aides as well as special education teaching staff is a major concern to all at The Gilbert School. Our regular education teachers have repeatedly complained about the lack of special education teachers, paraprofessionals/TAs and required IEP services. This condition has negated co-teaching, a model Gilbert has used in the past to implement inclusionary instructional practices on behalf of these students.

Also, one special education teacher for the ED/BD population at Gilbert was reassigned by the WBOE to an elementary school, thereby leaving the students at Gilbert to be covered by the remaining special education personnel, who are short in staffing. I must note here that a CREC audit is being conducted to determine if additional paraprofessional/TAs and qualified-credentialed special education teachers are required. This audit will not be complete until November 1, 2014. Consequently, our special education

— COMMITTED TO OUR HERITAGE — FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE —

The Gilbert School is a privately endowed, publicly supported, independent New England Academy. Founded in 1895 through the generous bequest of William L. Gilbert, renowned philanthropist and entrepreneur, the school is operated under authority granted by the State of Connecticut as the designated high school for the town of Winchester.

Page 2

Ms. Charlene Russell-Tucker

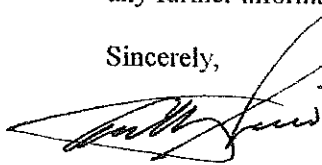
students will lose a whole quarter of the academic year waiting for this process to be completed, and I fear the whole first semester, before an action plan can be developed by the administration of the WBOE to address our concerns.

Second, there are required services specific to students that have not materialized beyond the 1:1/2:1 or small group classroom aide. This is due to the inadequate programming by the WBOE for the ED/BD population. I will be happy to provide you with more student specific information if you so desire. I also have to call into question the lack of transition services, life skill training and a less than adequate ASD program for students on the spectrum. In addition, curriculum modifications and alternative assessment settings are not being adequately addressed as specified in student IEP's due to the presence of only one certified high school special education teacher for over forty students.

Numerous PPT meetings have been canceled due to the WBOE administration not being available. There was one day in September when all special education teachers were pulled from the building for training on appropriate IEP writing. The WBOE special education teachers, who were already worried about service delivery, were asked to make clerical corrections to IEPs and then notify parents of the changes. Some of these changes for transition services did require PPT's, but clearly others required a PPT meeting before the IEP could legally be changed. The WBOE held some PPT's, but not all that were required. I will also point out that I had to demand from the WBOE administration adequate class coverage for the missing special education teachers who were attending the IEP clerical training.

Clearly, the inadequacies demonstrated by the WBOE's administration warrants immediate attention and remedial action. My purpose in writing to you was to obtain the State Department of Education's assistance in correcting this problem. I look forward to working with you and remain available to provide any further information you may require.

Sincerely,



Anthony Serio
Head of School/Superintendent



Alan J. Strauss
Principal

Cc: Steven Sedlack, The W. L. Gilbert School Corporation Chair
Anne Watson, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools
Susan Hoffnagle, Winchester Board of Education Chair

Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Ct 06106
Attn: Ms. Charlene Russell Tucker

October 17, 2014

Ms. Russell Tucker

Subj: Removal of Board of Education Members and Special Education

1. It is requested that per applicable state statues, you investigate the actions and behaviors of the following Winchester Board of Education members and take action to remove them from their positions on the Board: Susan Hoffnagle, Mary Ellen Valeyo Pratt, Christine Royer, Dr. Richard Dutton, Brian Shaughnessy, and Theresa Starzyk.
2. The justification for this request is to include, but not limited to, the attached letter from the Gilbert School and The Commission for Persons with Disabilities who have since January 2014 brought before the Board numerous violations and substantiated FAPE violations and continuing complaints from the community against the Superintendent and staff.
3. In a one year time frame there were 22 complaints, 6 hearing and 7 due process hearings.
4. In February 2014, the board asked Superintendent Danhey to investigate the Special Education Department. Superintendent Danhey is the 504 Compliance officer so he was investigating himself. In March 2014, Superintendent Danhey, Ania Czajkowski (PPS Director) and the Board lawyer Mark Saommaruga never presented to the board all the facts, which I told them was untrue. The presentation of the violations was not fully reveled, in fact Ania Czajkowski, admitted at a later date to some families that she was ordered to state there were no issues. This meeting was video recorded. This investigation caused more distrust and harm to the children and families by their outright neglect to address the issues.
5. The Board of Education members mentioned above have neglected to perform the duties for which they were required and there is enough probable cause for their immediate removal. There are 3 other members that should stay, one being on board only one month and the other 2 have been trying to correct these injustices, but are out voted by the above members.
6. In June Superintendent Danhey states he is leaving, a new Superintendent Anne Watson comes on board, Ania Czajkowski resigned, the Board lawyer Mark Sommaruga was removed from participating in Special Education student affairs. The school Counselor Laurie Eagan is gone and School Principal Matt Oconnell (school which houses the WISE Program) is gone.
7. It is also requested, that Thomas Danhey, Ania Czajkowski, Laurie Eagan, Rainy Deitz(WISE program teacher) and Nadine Savage have their state certifications removed by your department due to the injustices, cruelty, loss of education, denying of civil rights and violations

of state regulations. These five (5) have caused mental and physical harm to numerous children and families in this district. Your own Special Education Department was aware of what Tom Danhey and his staff were doing to the district children and families, yet never was anything done about it.

8. The Winchester School District problems are worse than those of Darien, Ct. which were addressed in 2013.

9. Why must disabled special needs children be denied their rights for so long? Why does no one care?

10. Chairwomen Susan Hoffnagle stated publicly at the meeting of the Gilbert Board of Education, that she had no knowledge of what was going. This is pure incompetence on her behalf. A Chairwomen has the responsibility to investigate complaints and find out what is going on. Her remark is a pure falsehood, as our Commission has been providing the Board information as to Special Education complaints for months and she chose to ignore them.

11. Lastly and most importantly it is requested that the Special Education for the Town of Winchester for grades K – 12 be ordered by the state to have the Gilbert School take control of it immediately before something drastic happens to a special needs child. Disabled/Special needs students at the Gilbert School do not have the resources allocated to them for their individual IEP goals to be met.

For God and Country



Arthur W. Melycher

Chairman, Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Copy to:

Office of Civil Rights, Boston

Gilbert School

Republican American

Register Citizen

Winsted Journal

Hartford Courant

November 2014

TO THE WINSTED BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS ON THE GILBERT BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE CREC REPORT IDENTIFIED ALL THE PROBLEMS THAT I HAVE POINTED OUT TO YOU SINCE THIS PAST DECEMBER. THAT IS ALMOST A FULL YEAR OF THE DISTRICTS CHILDREN LOSSING EDUCATION, DUE TO NOT LISTENING TO THE COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND PARENTS. INSTEAD YOU ASKED TOMMY DENAHEY TO INVESTIGATION HIMSELF. YOU WERE THEN FEED A BAG FULL OF LIES, WHICH WAS GIVEN TO YOU BY ANIA AND THE BOARD LAWYER. IN THE MEAN TIME THE CHILDREN SUFFERED LOSS OF EDUCATION, IEP'S NOT BEING FOLLOWED AND PARENTS PAIN AND SUFFERING OVER THERE CHILD NOT GETTING A PROPER EDUCATION.

IT TOOK A LETTER FROM GILBERT TO BRING THIS TO LIGHT TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. I FOLLOWED IT WITH A LETTER TO HAVE THE STATE REMOVE 6 OF YOU BOARD MEMBERS DUE TO NOT FOLLOWING STATE GUIDE LINES AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS. AS I SPEAK THIS IS BEING DONE BY BOTH THE STATE AND THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS. THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS HAS READ THE CREC REPORT WHICH I SENT TO THEM AND IN SPEAKING WITH THEM TODAY THER LETTER TO THE WINCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION IS BEING MODIFIED TO INCLUDE PARTS OF THE CREC REPORT. YOU 6 MEMBERS SHOULD HANG YOUR HEADS IN SHAME.

THE COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE 25 PRESENT FAMILIES THAT HAVE CONTACTED ME AND MANY RESIDENTS ARE DEMANDING AND REQUESTING THAT GILBERT SCHOOL TAKE CHARGE OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN OF WINSTED. THEY KNOW WHAT HAS TO BE DONE AND HAVE THE STAFF THAT CAN DO WHAT IS REQUIRED BY LAW AND WHAT PARENTS ASK FOR THERE CHILDREN.

THE NEWEST OCR COMPLIANT THAT IS GOING OUT FRIDAY TO THE OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IS A TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM THAT IS REQUIRED UNDER THE FEDERAL GUIDELINES CALLED "IDEA" THAT HASN'T BEEN DONE FOR THE LAST 3 YEARS UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP. GILBERT IS READY TO IMPLIMENT THIS TOMMORROW IT WOULD TAKE THE WINCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT A YEAR, WHICH IS UNACCEPTABLE.

YOUR NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR OR WHAT EVER HER TITLE IS ELIZABETH CATAROUS THINKS SHE IS GOD, BUT SHE IS NOT. SHAKING HER FIST AT PARENTS AND REQUESTING A MEETING WITH THE FAMILIES PRIOR TO A PPT IS NOT HAPPENING ANYMORE. THE FAMILIES WANT TO GO STRAIGHT TO A PPT, NO MORE PRIVATE MEETINGS. ALL PPT'S ARE GOING TO BE TAPE RECORDED. IF I HAVE TO GO TO THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT TO STRAIGHTEN THIS OUT I PROMISE YOU I WILL. THIS MATTER CAN LONGER BE WHITE WASHED AS THE FAMILIES ARE COMING FORWARD EACH WEEK.

YOU 6 MEMBERS OF THE WINCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION NEED TO RESIGN NOW AS CHILDREN CANNOT AFFORD ANYMORE LOSS OF EDUCATION.