

My name is Sara Schultz, from Portland, Oregon. I'm testifying on behalf of my son, Keith. He is 7 1/2 years old. He loves Legos, puzzles and storynory audio stories. He has a twin sister named Lauren. She loves art, gymnastics and singing. I'm a single mother.

I hope for them to grow up to be happy, kind, curious, critical thinking adults who most of all feel loved and accepted members of society.

Keith has autism, anxiety and ADHD and learning disabilities.  
Lauren has ADHD and is on an IEP for speech issues and is currently being tested for additional learning difficulties.

Both of my twins have a form of a disability, but only my son's adversely affects his behavior.

Behavioral disabilities result in much greater school trauma and exclusion than the types of disabilities my daughter experiences.

My son has experienced years of reduced education due to his disability.

In kindergarten, the Ivy School reduced his school day by two hours a day, I requested a SPED evaluation, but they declined to evaluate. Some days I was called to pick him up even earlier.

The fall of first grade, I again requested an evaluation, and the Ivy School agreed. He did not receive any sped services while undergoing evaluation. He spent most of the fall sitting in the assistant director's office, as she understood him best and it was where he felt safe. He was suspended over 10 days at the Ivy school the fall of kindergarten.

In December of grade one, he was given an IEP and immediately placed in a focus SES classroom at Buckman, where he was restrained 29 times in the first 16 days. He was supposed to be in general education 78% of the time, but never met his teacher. He was also repeatedly isolated in the calm down room and suspended regularly. He had approximately 18 days of suspension in grade one. In March, without an IEP meeting, his teacher placed him in isolation from the rest of the class. He spent days alone at school, and many days were spent on the ipad watching youtube videos like ninjago for 3 hours or more at a time.

At this point I didn't see why I was sending him. School was: social isolation, no education, excess screen time, coupled with increasing anxiety and trauma response from my son. So, many days I kept him home, instead teaching him reading and math on my own. I would guess he missed around 40 days of school in first grade with suspensions and days not attended.

He was not sent home with any educational materials for the days he was suspended or missed. He did not work with a qualified teacher when he was isolated at Buckman- he was with paraeducators.

In the fall, he was moved to Pioneer Special school, which runs 8-1:35. His sister remained at Buckman, from 8:45-3:00. PPS didn't get transportation set up, so I was spending 5 hours a day getting them to and from schools, aside from a couple weeks when he rode the bus, only to have another transportation change and lose that, so I was back to providing transportation. While at Pioneer, he continued to experience regular restraints and isolation, and was denied recess. He also was spending most of his days outside of the classroom with staff, not a qualified teacher. He regressed at home to the point that he was crying a lot of the day and trying to kick his sister and myself.

At that point, his dad and I decided to pull Keith out of school and homeschool. I'm a single mom and the primary parent. I undertook the role of purchasing educational supplies and teaching him on the days that I'm not working. I'm able to work part-time and make enough to get by, however I do not have the option to work more, because I am taking care of Keith. His twin sister attends school in person. The dynamic of having one attend and the other at home is complicated. Lauren has told me she wished he could go to school, that he could be like the other kids. With Keith needing so much assistance, we have less to give to Lauren, so she is negatively impacted. He's also very socially motivated so being excluded hurts him at his core.

My twins have very different disabilities, one resulting in a minor impact on our family and access to services, the other resulting in major impact, isolation and lack of educational access. It's not equal access to a free and appropriate education.