

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Contact: Tess Koenigsmark
860-240-8790

Legislators Call on State Department of Education to Implement Cost-Saving Measures

Request update on special education improvements passed in 2015

State Reps. Michelle Cook (D-Torrington), **Linda Gentile** (D-Derby/Ansonia), and **Michael D'Agostino** (D-Hamden) sent a letter to the State Department of Education recently requesting a progress report on the implementation of cost-saving measures related to special education.

Legislation passed in 2015 directed the department to create a new Individualized Education Program (IEP) form that is easier for parents and students to understand and implement an online IEP system to be made available to public school districts at no cost. IEPs are documents created by the school system for each special education student outlining their educational plans.

The letter states, "We are specifically concerned that the implementation of a digital IEP system allowing districts to share information online with authorized State Department of Education personnel for audit purposes, negating the need for certain site-visits, may never have been implemented."

The letter requests a progress report specifically on the implementation of Sections 264 to 285 of [Public Act 15-5](#).

"We passed these proposals in order to improve the special education system for families and schools while containing costs. IEPs are integral to meeting special education students' needs, but the lack of a streamlined process can create headaches for everyone involved," **Rep. Cook** said. "Given the state's current fiscal situation, it's particularly concerning that we have not seen the implementation of a digital IEP system. The current system is not cost-efficient for the state or for school districts."

“We pushed for the passage of this bill because we knew implementing the new digital IEP form would improve Connecticut’s special education system,” **Rep. Gentile** said. “It’s important that we start this cost saving measure as soon as possible and hope that our inquiry to the Department of Education will give us a better understanding as to why certain provisions in the bill have yet to be implemented.”

“The legislation that was signed into law in 2015 sought to strengthen our state’s special education system by putting our students first and ensuring their individual educational needs were met. This bill sought to implement a digital IEP system and develop a new form that was easier for parents and students to understand – at no cost to public schools. Some of these provisions, however, have not yet been implemented. It is vital for us to better understand why these efforts to improve our education system have been stalled so we can identify a way to bring this measure to fruition for the improvement of our children’s schooling,” said **Rep. D’Agostino**.

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**** Copy of letter attached.**