



ALERT FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS



The Office of the Child Advocate (“OCA”) is an independent governmental agency and Disability Rights Connecticut (“DRCT”) is a non-profit organization, both with the mission of protecting the rights of people with disabilities in CT including students. From March 2022 to March 2024, OCA and DRCT worked together on an investigation into High Road Schools (“High Road”), a group of eight state-approved private special education programs (“APSEP”) in Connecticut owned by a private for-profit company. High Road is one of the state’s largest APSEPs and receives millions of dollars in public funds each year. High Road primarily serves children from low-income school districts.

Investigative findings were troubling and include the following areas of concern:

I. Inadequate Staffing: OCA and DRCT found that many staff at High Road are inadequately certified, trained, and qualified to deliver special education and related services to your child. This violates individual student Individualized Education Plans (“IEPs”), contracts with your local school district as well as state standards and federal law designed to protect your child and ensure their civil rights to special education are met.

II. Insufficient Educational Programming: Individualized educational programming is a cornerstone of special education yet is an area of significant concern at High Road Schools. OCA’s and DRCT’s investigation found serious and widespread deficiencies in all aspects of educational service delivery across multiple High Road locations, which brings into question whether your child is receiving a free appropriate public education (“FAPE”) in the least restrictive environment (“LRE”) with individualized related services (speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, academic and behavioral supports, etc.), in accordance with federal and state law, including the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”). Additionally, violations of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act were identified for failure to provide services in the most integrated setting and failure to ensure students with behavioral health and/or developmental disabilities have an equal educational opportunity to students without disabilities.

III. Failure of School Districts to Monitor and Provide Required Oversight: School districts are responsible for ensuring a student’s IEP is implemented and for oversight and monitoring of the schools and programs where they place students, including APSEPs. This monitoring and oversight must be meaningful, and attendance at PPTs and collection of Progress Reports alone is not adequate to ensure your child’s IEP is being properly implemented. DRCT/OCA reached out to 18 school districts with students placed at High Road during the review period to outline preliminary concerns, request follow up, and seek further information about monitoring of their students’ education at High Road. While some school districts followed up immediately, many districts did not provide any substantive response at all.

IV. CSDE Regulatory Oversight and IDEA Monitoring of High Road is Deficient: The Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”) is legally obligated to oversee all special education schools and programs, including APSEPs, and is responsible for regulatory compliance with state Standards and ensuring compliance with IDEA and relevant state special education laws. The investigation found significant deficiencies in this area.

The full Report and Executive Summary may be viewed online at <https://www.disrightsct.org/>, along with responses from High Road and Hartford Public Schools. Parents/guardians wishing to express concerns about their child’s experience at High Road or seeking to share their experiences, by name or anonymously, may do so at <https://www.disrightsct.org/high-road-schools>. Additionally, the DRCT Education Rights Clinic provides parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss any special education related issues with DRCT staff in a one-hour appointment which can be made online at [Ed Rights Clinic](#), by email to Ed.Clinic@DisRightsCT.org or by calling 860-310-1993.