



THE ASSEMBLY
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Spectrum Disorders
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ANGELO SANTABARBARA
Assemblyman 111th District

June 9th, 2020

The Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
State Capitol Building
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I write regarding students with disabilities that are aging out of public education this year and will not be able to return to school after COVID-19.

Although most schools have been able to adapt to online education during the pandemic, many special education students have been unable to engage in remote learning or to adapt to online lessons, for some it means losing the last year of education they are entitled to. As you know, students in New York State are entitled to attend public school until the end of the school year in which they turn 21. Although most students graduate within four years, often students with disabilities need this additional time to acquire the skills they need to be successful. This aged out population will not be able to return to school to make-up all that they've lost in educational needs during the pandemic.

I urge you to make the necessary changes to give students who are aging out of school this year the opportunity to return for the 2020-21 school year rather than lose their final year of education through no fault of their own. This includes students who are deaf or hard of hearing, students who have visual impairments, students who have multiple disabilities and some that cannot use computers independently. These students have been unable to receive many of the important services defined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and that the State has an obligation to provide, even under these circumstances. These plans are unique to each special education student and outline the services and supports for speech, visual, hearing and a number of other learning disabilities. Many of the one-on-one services in each plan, including occupational and physical therapy, simply could not be effectively provided online. I assure you that there are thousands of parents and teachers who agree this is the right thing to do.

Please do all that you can to ensure these students who would otherwise age out of school this year do not lose the education they are entitled to as a result of the pandemic.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara
Assembly Chair of the Sub-Committee on Autism Spectrum Disorders