



LDAMC inc.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD, INC.

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DO NO HARM: On Closing the Learning Centers

Imagine yourself, dear School Board Member, sitting in a board room. Dr. Weast is delivering his budget proposal for next year. Only this time, you have a language based learning disability and are having a difficult time following the logic of the discussion and the important statistics that provide supporting evidence for his objectives. He is speaking very fast and just as you begin to understand his point, he is off to the next point. Your memory is not absorbing the necessary information fast enough so that it can be retrieved later and reevaluated. If that weren't frustrating enough, it is very difficult for you to write and listen at the same time, so you stop trying to take notes. Everyone else seems quite pleased and is taking notes, laughing at the witty asides and agreeing with him. You are alone.

Weast wants everyone in the same room and has appointed a "special" aide to your side so that you have support. This person, who is expected to know the subject and details of Weast's presentation, is there to "translate" information to you. While this person means well, you are trying to listen to two persons; Weast and the "special education" person. You know that while you are trying to absorb what Weast just said, he is off to another point.

Do you feel slightly humiliated having a "special" person hovering over you? How long will it be before you disengage from the group, defend yourself by "looking smart", crack jokes or fall on the floor? – or perhaps you will just silently sit and wait till the presentation is over, hoping the time passes quickly - at which point you may try to read the speech on the internet the next morning...if it is there...

Is this the learning environment you, as School Board members, wish for our students with learning disabilities? The law, IDEA 2004, calls for a continuum of placement for students with disabilities. That protects the student who cannot learn in the regular classroom and yet is capable of both learning the general curriculum and earning a diploma, given a safe learning environment and a teacher educated in strategies for teaching students with learning disabilities.

We are taxpayers and you are our elected School Board. We expect you to uphold the motto of our county's school system – SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT. We ask that you keep the Learning Centers, make them accountable for our students and most importantly assign teachers who are trained in teaching students with learning disabilities. We trust that you will act in a spirit of love and for the intent and literal meaning of the law.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Board of the Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County.

Learning Disabilities Association of Montgomery County is a 501(c)3 organization. No goods or services were exchanged. Please retain this letter for your tax purposes. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of U.S. law.