

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1211

S.P. 392

In Senate, April 10, 1987

Reference to the Committee on Education suggested and ordered printed.

JOY J. O'BRIEN, Secretary of the Senate
Presented by Senator ANDREWS of Cumberland.

Cosponsored by Senator ESTES of York, Representative
KILKELLY of Wiscasset, Representative SMALL of Bath.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN

**AN ACT to Provide Assistance to Parents of
Exceptional Students.**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

20-A MRSA §7202, sub-§7-A is enacted to read:

7-A. Notice to parents. Notify in writing the parent or parents of a child with special education needs of the support, advisory, counseling and advocacy services available to assist them during the identification, evaluation and development of educational programming for their child. That notice shall identify parent and family support, advisory, counseling, advocacy and other related groups, organizations and agencies which offer services locally or on a statewide basis. The notice shall include a

1 description of the services available and the names,
2 addresses and phone numbers of contact persons for
3 each group. This information shall be reviewed and
4 updated annually.

5 STATEMENT OF FACT

6 Upon learning that their child may need special
7 education services, parents often feel very much
8 alone, intimidated, and at a loss for how to get in-
9 formation and assistance. Departmental rules require
10 that parents receive prior notification of the Pupil
11 Evaluation Team (PET) meeting, including a list of
12 their legal rights. However, many parents may not
13 understand that notice, know how to exercise their
14 rights or know where to turn for help.

15 Parents are encouraged to actively participate on
16 the PET, yet they are not routinely given the neces-
17 sary support to do so effectively. Although the
18 State presently has an array of informational and pa-
19 rental support resources, many parents only find out
20 about them through chance and often after the time
21 when services are most critically needed.

22 There is presently no systematic way of making
23 available to parents resources which can:

24 1. Put them in touch with other parents of chil-
25 dren with special needs;

26 2. Help them find services within the community;
27 and

28 3. Help them understand the special education
29 system.

30 This gap in services is a major roadblock to an
31 effective working relationship between parents and
32 school, as well as to the parents' ability to make a
33 positive contribution to their child's educational
34 planning.

1 This bill requires that when parents are notified
2 of their right to be a member of the PET, they also
3 be given information regarding support and advocacy
4 services available to them.

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