

Dear Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I want to share my story with you in support of House Bill 3318. I was seriously injured while implementing a school afterschool program that had become a convenient place to put kids who were having trouble doing their homework. Quite often these students had behavior situations I was not told about.

There was a senior (a male, age 18) who regularly forgot his glasses and/or his homework. One evening I asked if he had his glasses and homework with him and whether he needed any assistance. He picked me up by my throat and pushed me into the wall. Other adults in the room came to my aid and got him to let go of me, but I had bruising around my neck, an extremely sore throat and was beyond scared of this young man.

I reported the incident to the school principal, who nonchalantly said, "I don't know what you expected from him, he has an IEP for violent behavior."

I was stunned and a whole lot upset that this knowledge was not shared with our school afterschool personnel, including myself. It put my staff, our students and myself in a very dangerous position. Many of our students were traumatized by the incident as well as the staff. I paid for counseling to get through the fear of this young man, the memories of losing my breath and the knowledge I could have died if others had not stepped in.

I reported the incident, but nothing came of it because the student had an IEP for behavior. I became the dirty dog when he was disciplined, because the school didn't want to be involved. I was told I was his last hope and that I had to take him back. I don't know if the incident was addressed in a safety meeting, but it was never repeated as we all kept our distance from him following his return to the afterschool program.

I did not receive any supports after the incident. Instead, I had to seek out training myself to avoid this from happening again. To this day, I have an overwhelming fear of suffocating from the incident and have been diagnosed with PTSD following the incident from therapy I sought for myself and paid for myself.

Lynn Anderson
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