

May 27, 2007

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Deanne Katz and I am a rising senior at Hamilton College where I study neuroscience with a focus on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This summer I have been awarded a research grant to study how Massachusetts is dealing with the education of students with ASD and I would greatly appreciate your help with this project. One of my goals is to understand how the requirements of special education legislation are carried out by school systems. In addition, I am interested in parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of services provided by school systems. You can click the link below to find the questionnaire that should only take about 15-20 minutes to complete and will allow me to understand how you, the parents and guardians, are able to access services that may or may not be available to your children. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and all information you provide will be anonymous unless you choose to provide your contact details. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. You may omit answers to some questions if you wish to do so.

If you feel there are issues that I have not covered in this questionnaire or if you would like to provide additional anecdotal information about your experience with special education in the public sector, please include your contact information at the bottom of the questionnaire and I will schedule a personal interview with you at your earliest convenience. Providing this information and/or agreeing to an interview are NOT REQUIRED by this project or to complete the questionnaire. If you do provide contact information, it will be kept strictly confidential and will be separated from any anecdotal information you provide, thus keeping your interview responses anonymous. Contact information will be destroyed once all data are collected. Pseudonyms will be used in the reporting of any specific interview responses for the final written product. If you have any questions about this questionnaire or how the results will be used, please feel free to email me at dkatz@hamilton.edu. Furthermore, you can also contact the IRB chair of Hamilton College, Professor Jen Borton, at jborton@hamilton.edu with any questions or concerns you may have about the project.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Sincerely,

Deanne Katz

Questionnaire link: <http://www.hamilton.edu/college/its/survey/index.html?id=562>