

## Murphy, Elias

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**From:** Babs Osisek <babsosisek1024@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 12:50 PM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** Proposed Special Education Legislation

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

To whom it may concern:

My name is Barbara Osisek and I live in Limerick Maine. I have two children who are special needs one of which whom is under the care of CDS. While I understand the concerns that have surrounded CDS, it plays a very vital role in aiding youth to the proper resources to gain help for a more successful path into the public education system. My eldest was recently placed into kindergarten under the public school system and the absolute hurricane of issues we ran into is unacceptable. To allow the DOE to take over the separate entity of CDS this hastily with no plan for a budget or how to provide the proper care to every child in need is beyond irresponsible.

*Please do NOT adopt this legislation and slow down the process of transitioning special education services from CDS to School Administrative Units. The DOE's current proposal is incomplete and will hurt kids and families, so please vote against it. Ask DOE to go back to work and provide a funding mechanism and a budget, as well as guidance to address school readiness, community partnerships, and collaboration with stakeholders.*

*I hope very sincerely that you understand the gravity of the impact this decision has on special needs families across the state. They're already struggling and have dealt with many set backs due to the pandemic and this would only grind the wheels even further. Please take the time to vote against this legislation and allow the proper time and planning to occur before a hasty mistake is made and children are forced to bare the weight of those consequences, children who already have enough on their plates to overcome.*

*I appreciate your time and consideration of this very serious matter.*

*Thank you,*

*Barbara Osisek*

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## Murphy, Elias

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**From:** Connor Archer <connor@thecourageousstepsproject.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 2:22 PM  
**To:** EDU; Dill, James; Osher, Laurie; Dunphy, Michelle; Drinkwater, Gary; Carmichael, Meldon; Rosen, Kimberley; Guerin, Stacey; Rafferty, Joe; Millett, Rebecca; McCrea, David; Brennan, Michael; Daughtry, Matthea; Woodsome, David; Crockett, Ed; Dodge, Jan; Lyman, Sheila; Roche, Tim; Salisbury, Suzanne; Sampson, Heidi; Stearns, Paul  
**Cc:** Connor Archer  
**Subject:** Connor Archer, Old Town / Milford, ME - Representing Providers & Children with Disabilities

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

Good Afternoon Maine Senators and Representatives,

My name is Connor Archer, and I am the Founder of *The Courageous Steps Project*, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that strives to help children and young adults with various abilities and challenges in Eastern Maine. I started the organization during my sophomore year of high school, now 8 years ago. I am now 24 years old and recently graduated with my Masters in Business and my Bachelors in Integrated Technology.

The Courageous Steps Project operates a current program called the Green House Village Preschool in Milford that contracts with CDS to provide special education services for children ages three to five. Our program serves children from all over the Eastern Maine region including the communities of Old Town, Bradley, Glenburn, Greenbush, Hampden, and Orrington.

**Some of you know me or may have heard of me over the years through my work around the state.**

For decades, this program has been contracted through CDS to provide these instrumental services to support the educational development of children. As a young adult who lives with Autism and benefited from CDS from ages 3-5 years old, I understand how important these services are as the developmental foundation for all children.

**A strong early childhood foundation supports a child's overall development.** At that time, my diagnosis was bleak and many professionals said I would never talk or say a word. Well, I proved them wrong and a major part of that was because of the foundation I received from private programs like the Green House and many others across the state, who have decades of experience to provide to Maine's youngest population.

***I wouldn't be where I am today without these instrumental services!***

**Please slow down the process of transitioning early childhood special education services from the CDS system to School Administrative Units (SAUs).** The Maine Department of Education's current proposal is incomplete and will hurt children and families. **Please vote against this proposal.** In my conversations with special education directors and case managers around the state, there are still many questions to be answered and more information needed to make the best decision.

**This proposal DOES NOT provide adequate time for proper transition for the SAUs in the state of Maine.** I strongly encourage you to ask the Maine DOE to go back to work and provide a funding mechanism and a budget, as well as more guidance to SAU's on how to accomplish the task of identifying and educating 3-5 year olds with special needs.

***I would love the opportunity to speak at Wednesday's public hearing on behalf of providers and as an individual living with Autism.*** We need to listen to providers/professionals in the actual setting (in addition to families) before making an impactful decision like this one. **They are the ones that are in the trenches everyday serving Maine's youngest children and families!**

If you would like to speak with me directly beforehand, please contact me with the information below my signature, and I'll be happy to schedule a time to sit down with you.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

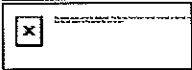
Connor J. Archer, *M.B.A*  
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[connor@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:connor@thecourageousstepsproject.org)

**Courageous Steps Project:** [www.thecourageousstepsproject.org](http://www.thecourageousstepsproject.org)

**Green House Village Preschool:** [www.greenhousevillage.org](http://www.greenhousevillage.org)

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**Mission:** The Courageous Steps Project strives to raise awareness of all abilities and challenges for children and young adults and channels resources to enhance their success in school and in life.

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**Murphy, Elias**

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**From:** Danielle Cote <dcote@waban.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 1:21 PM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** Maine DOW CDS Legislation

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

To whom it may concern:

*Please do NOT adopt this legislation and slow down the process of transitioning special education services from CDS to School Administrative Units. The DOE's current proposal is incomplete and will hurt kids and families, so please vote against it. Ask DOE to go back to work and provide a funding mechanism and a budget, as well as guidance to address school readiness, community partnerships, and collaboration with stakeholders. Thank you.*

This would be detrimental to the population we serve and help navigate special education services. Not to mention the strain on the communities would increase exponentially in already trying times attempting to find appropriate services that are able to meet the high needs of children served through CDS. SAU's are not prepared to take on this weight at this time and a better plan/execution needs to be developed for a change like this to be successful. I have worked in children's services for 10 years and a sudden and drastic change like what is proposed is not feasible and will cause a breakdown in services for a population that lacks a voice. These children need significant support and we would be failing them to allow this to go through.

Please feel free to reach out for any additional information or questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

**Danielle Cote, LSW**  
Children's Case Management Supervisor  
Desk: (207) 324-7955 ext. 639  
Cell: (207) 608-9342  
Fax: (207) 490-1824

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## Murphy, Elias

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**From:** Diane Harrington <harrington07@roadrunner.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2022 9:27 PM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** CDS Services

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Attn: Elias Murphy

In reading the proposal to moving CDS services for ages 3-5 to local SAUs there are some real issues that need to be considered further PLEASE!

It does not assure that these children will receive the service needed locally. That will certainly be a barrier for rural locations. Another major obstacle is no extra funding allotted for the SAUs to provide the most qualified services. This will be a real challenge to smaller SAUs!

Please, it's imperative to provide this early intervention education for all children to help them be successful in school and become productive adults.

Sent from my iPhone

**Murphy, Elias**

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**From:** Joy Lin <writejoy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 12:36 PM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** Early Childhood Legislation

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

Dear Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

I am a Brunswick resident and current Maine LEND trainee (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities) at the University of New England. My background is in educational research, and I have a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology.

Please slow down the process of transitioning early childhood special education services from the CDS system to School Administrative Units. The Department of Education's current proposal is incomplete and will hurt kids and families, so please vote against it. Ask DOE to go back to work and provide a funding mechanism and a budget, as well as more guidance to SAU's on how to accomplish the task of identifying and educating 3-5 year olds with special needs.

Thank you,  
Joy Lin

Elias Murphy

Committee Clerk

Dear Sir:

I am emailing my concerns in reference to the proposed changes to the Child Development Services changes being proposed and the impact on our children ages 0-5.

My husband and I adopted our biological granddaughter due to the impact of the opiate crisis here in Aroostook County. We live in Houlton, population around 5500 people. We began our adoption process when our "daughter" was 2; she was in foster care and was being taken to Aroostook County Action Program by the foster family she stayed with at that time. ACAP was just one of the services available to families here in Houlton at that time. ACAP was probably the only consistent thing that happened in our daughter's life; her biological parents were not married, she had 3 other siblings ranging in ages from 6 months to 7 years old. Her biological mother had 4 children, all of which had different fathers and all of which were either in prison, had been in prison or were going to prison due to opiates and other drugs. Our girl had been in 3 foster homes by the time we got her at 2 years old. She came to us via adoption with the label special needs. I can tell you that is not a lie. These children of the opiate crisis have many many special needs that must be addressed at the closest local level we can provide. If the only thing a 2 year old has for consistency is ACAP then we are really failing our next 2 generations of children. They have been neglected, abandoned, not fed, not clothed, not loved or hugged or kissed by their biological parents. The employees at ACAP provided such a consistent, loving, caring, hopeful environment for our daughter that she would not have been as resilient as she is now. We cant spend time driving to Presque Isle or Bangor for services that must be provided here at home. The teachers in the schools are aware of our community crisis but are not equipped to handle the emotional traumas of all of these children. There are so, so, many little ones that come from these types of "homes" that our system is being flooded with children that don't know where mom and dad are or who they are at times. Our daughters biological mother was just found deceased from an overdose and has 4 children that have all been adopted through the kinship program. Every one of these 4 children need services that are local, not 1-2 hours drive away. Please rethink this situation, please try to understand how important it is to those of us who have adopted our family members and still have to work and shop and get them to the doctors and counselors that in turn will help them to become healthy happy citizens of our communities. We owe these children that.

Thank-you.

Kim McGillicuddy

Houlton, Maine

207 532 3363

Grafn8tor@gmail.com



March 11, 2022

Dear Clerk Alias Murphy,

The Education and Cultural Affairs Committee will be discussing a plan for Child Development Services on Wednesday, March 16. Below are my comments I would like to share with the Committee Members. As this is not a bill number at this time, I am not able to submit these comments through the online testimony format. Thank you,

Peter Lindsay  
North Yarmouth

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee.

As you prepare to debate the latest proposals concerning **Child Development Services**, I want to share my thoughts on next steps. After listening to the recent presentation to the Children's Caucus and talking with providers who work directly with families with young children around the state, I suggest the Legislature focus on these areas as first steps:

- **Increase funding to serve more children birth to age 2.** Maine is currently tied for last in the nation for infants receiving early intervention services. By intervening earlier, we will both help children and families and reduce the number of older children in public schools needing special education services. Early identification and services result in fewer children needing special education when arriving in the public school system.
- **Expand eligibility for services.** My understanding is that Maine has one of the narrowest criteria. Again, early identification is the most effective way to address any delays and disabilities.
- **Explore and plan for a centralized billing process.** A centralized system would help service providers, child cares, Head Starts and public schools. Especially as schools take on a larger role in early intervention services, they will need a simpler and more efficient way to conduct billing, rather than every provider trying to meet the various billing regulations and rule changes. This was one of the key recommendations from the outside evaluators who studied Maine's early intervention services.
- **Develop a three to five year plan for transition of four year olds, and perhaps three year olds, to the local school districts.** Maine is the outlier and many other states have already made this change. We should learn from their experiences. My understanding is that other states have noted that this transition takes careful planning and time. Maine could benefit from consultants from another state (or states) that have already made this change, and can help lay out a timeline with benchmarks. This kind of plan also will give providers and parents more confidence that they know what will happen in future years, and provide time for incremental steps to be done in an orderly manner.

The early intervention system is complicated, and there are many challenges to changing such a system. My understanding is that change is absolutely necessary, and there are several steps that can immediately help support children and families. However, massive changes such as

moving 3- and 4-year old services to local school districts needs more planning and details to be worked out.

I encourage the Education Committee to review the Children's Caucus presentation on Child Development Services, to review again the recommendations that arose from Legislatively-created Task Groups, and then to create a 3-5 year plan for any major changes to the overall system.

Thank you.



Peter Lindsay  
North Yarmouth, Maine

Peter Lindsay  
440 Mountfort Road  
North Yarmouth, ME 04097  
207-595-8967  
Plindsay1954@gmail.com

## Murphy, Elias

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**From:** Tracey Miller <traceymiller@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 3:14 PM  
**To:** Tracey Miller  
**Subject:** CDS Draft Bill

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

Dear Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

I write today to ask that the committee extend the proposed timeline for transitioning early childhood special education services from Child Development Services to School Administrative Units.

I am certainly not opposed to the idea of a new model for the provision of services to children with developmental disabilities here in Maine. As a CDS employee, I am well aware of, and daily frustrated by, the long-standing deficiencies in the system. However, a change this monumental needs to be carefully planned and thoughtfully executed; a July 1, 2023 transition date is simply too soon. The current proposal before the committee does not include enough detail regarding exactly how this transition is meant to happen. Among other things, little information is offered regarding how community supports such as child cares, center-based preschools, Head Starts, and related service providers will participate in this new model. All are vital components of the special education system and should be included in planning. The proposal also does not offer clarity on protections for current CDS staff during a hybrid/transition period and beyond. I fear that without more information, many CDS employees -- already stretched thin and under intense pressure -- will choose to leave the system rather than "wait and see" what might happen to their positions.

I hope that the committee will slow this process, taking more time for research and planning, ensuring that current providers are protected and that through it all, children and families continue to receive the high-quality services to which they are entitled.

Thank you all for your work on behalf of our state, and for taking the time to wrestle with this very important issue.

Best wishes,  
Tracey Miller, M.Ed. (Special Education/Early Intervention)  
Lewiston

**Murphy, Elias**

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**From:** Wanwisa Leighton <wanwisaleighton@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 18, 2022 12:52 PM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** Please vote against it on March 23rd.

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

*Hello,*

*My name is Wanwisa Leighton. My daughter go to specilized preschool in Sanford.*

*Please do NOT adopt this legislation and slow down the process of transitioning special education services from CDS to School Administrative Units. The DOE's current proposal is incomplete and will hurt kids and families, so please vote against it. Ask DOE to go back to work and provide a funding mechanism and a budget, as well as guidance to address school readiness, community partnerships, and collaboration with stakeholders.*

*Thank you,*

*Wanwisa*

## Murphy, Elias

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**From:** Deborah Patten <deborahpatten53@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 19, 2022 10:17 AM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** Fwd: For Education Committee public hearing re CDS March 23

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

To the honorable Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Education Committee members:

As a retired pediatrician of 30 something years in midcoast Maine, I was disheartened but not shocked at the poor referral rates to CDS. However, I immediately had reactions and explanations. Early referral to these essential services is critical, but the system deteriorated substantially over my decades of practice. I have listed below my thoughts and explanations, some attributable to families, some to medical offices, but most to the decay within the CDS system itself. The list is based on specific events.

### Families:

- may not recognize a delay
- may skip an appointment
- may deny a problem
- may be rushed/distracted/didn't listen to the conversation
- sent a substitute caretaker unfamiliar with the child
- changed contact info
- didn't follow through when contacted by CDS
- didn't understand who was calling once contacted by CDS

### The medical office:

- didn't collect updated family contact info
- skipped a thorough well visit (shots only, cancellations, conversion of sick to quick well visit, etc)
- rushed (lots of productivity pressure in the 'business' of medicine now)
- insurance won't cover routine visits, or insurance is lacking
- seen by a different provider who may not be as familiar with the family
- seen by a provider non qualified to assess development (urgent care, etc)
- the referral department has no idea how to set up a CDS referral (often due to CDS changes, see below)
- no way to 'code' via billing for the developmental assessment, so even if done, it can't be detected when surveying the record
- the ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD. The three EMRs that I used over time lacked a way to order a CDS referral. This is a big problem.

### CDS itself:

- greatly diminished services available
- ever changing services
- travel for services difficult to prohibitive

- delay in contacting family
- no feedback to providers making the referral
- residents of one county may be sent to many other counties for services (examples: Sagadahoc referred to Cumberland, Knox, and/or Kennebec)
- NO services available (Example: "Our therapist is out for a year. Here's a list of exercises to do with your child")
- Limited services available (Example: "Your child needs speech, OT, and PT, but we can only provide one of those at a time.")

I hope that my experience is helpful in REBUILDING this service, which is so essential to future potential. It worked well once!

Deborah Patten MD FAAP  
Bath ME

## Murphy, Elias

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**From:** Karen Lin <karenlin207@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 20, 2022 11:01 AM  
**To:** EDU  
**Subject:** CDS Testimony - Karen Lin

**This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.**

I'm writing to provide feedback on proposed legislation regarding Child Development Services.

I am the lead teacher at Gorham Cooperative Preschool. Part of my responsibilities include recognizing children who are developmentally behind their peers. I have previous experience working at a special needs preschool where I was able to witness the power of early intervention. Now I'm able to see this same progress when one of my preschool students receives support from CDS. The speech therapist, occupational therapist and behavioral therapist from CDS all have great training, experience and skills that make a huge difference to the children they support. I am also the parent of a fourteen year old who spent two years receiving speech therapy through CDS when she was young and since then she has not needed any further special education support.

While watching children thrive when supported is amazing, watching children and families wait months and months for support is heartbreaking. At this point if I don't recognize a problem and reach out to CDS within the first couple months of the school year, I know that child will be unlikely to receive any support for the remainder of the school year.

While I'm proud to be part of the frontlines recognizing developmental delays in children, I'm disappointed that here in Maine the system in place to address these delays often fails. This failure is such a missed opportunity to provide early support that often lessens the need for special education when a child is older.

I do not support the proposal to move early intervention services to the public schools. Public schools are not designed to support young children and their families. Services should be provided in spaces that best support young children, like their own home, preschool or child care.

I do support improving the current system to minimize waitlists and better identify children who need support. Consulting families and CDS staff is vital to creating a plan that will work to better serve the young children in Maine.

Thank you for allowing me to share my feedback.

-Karen Lin