

June 14, 2009

LETTER

## Paying for Private Schools

To the Editor:

Re "[Supreme Court to Address Meeting the Needs of Special-Education Students](#)" (news article, May 31):

The coming Supreme Court decision on whether public schools should reimburse parents of special-education students for private school tuition is of critical importance to thousands of vulnerable disabled children in this nation.

In Forest Grove, as in countless other school districts, special-needs youngsters are forced to seek private placements because the public schools simply did not offer the programs or services necessary to meet the child's unique needs. Without appropriate special-education services, special-needs children often fail to develop cognitively and emotionally, which can lead to higher rates of truancy, dropouts and crime.

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act was designed to protect students' rights to a "free appropriate public education." The assertion by Michael Best, general counsel to the New York City Department of Education, that parents are undermining cooperative efforts with school districts disregards the painful fact that in so many instances appropriate public education programs are never even offered.

School districts should spend taxpayer money providing appropriate services to their special-needs students rather than throwing up legal roadblocks to their due process rights.

Warren Sinsheimer

President

Partnership for Children's Rights

New York, June 4, 2009

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