

HB 836 -- Ombudsman Services for Children with Disabilities

Sponsor: Scharnhorst

This bill requires the Division of Special Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop and coordinate a program to provide ombudsman services to children and families regarding special education programs and services and to provide support to students with disabilities and their parents, guardians, and educators. The Governor must appoint a head ombudsman to serve as the director of the program. The program will provide information to families and educators about state and federal special education laws and services, act as a liaison between parents and schools, and help explore options to resolve conflicts. A representative of the program must be present at all individualized education plan meetings for special needs children, and the head ombudsman will have the final authority to resolve a disagreement in those meetings.