

Winston Helps Autistic Student Gain Access to Educational Support

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Working in partnership with [Equip for Equality](#), Winston helped the parents of a Chicago Public School (CPS) kindergarten student, who was diagnosed with autism, to gain access to the paraprofessional support and compensatory services he requires to learn and thrive.

In spring 2019, Winston began representing this CPS student after his parents noticed that his individualized education plan (IEP) was not being implemented in the classroom. At this time, CPS refused to incorporate the student's diagnosis of autism into his IEP. Winston advocated for the family and eventually persuaded CPS to modify the students' IEP and enroll him in The Chicago Academy Elementary School—a CPS school that provides better access to the proper special education services and paraprofessional support this student needs.

Unfortunately, school closures caused by COVID-19 created new challenges for the student and his parents. Many of his speech and occupational therapy sessions were canceled or were not available due to CPS' pandemic-related shift to remote learning and modification of related service provider sessions. In response, Winston submitted multiple IEP demand and dissent letters asking CPS to better implement our client's IEP.

In June 2021, more than two years after Winston began working on this case, we represented the student and his parents during mediation with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). As a result, Winston secured \$3,000 for the family to use on supplemental educational services of their choosing and ensured that the student was provided with "extended school year" services during the summer of 2021.

The Winston team who worked on this matter included Associate [John Secaras](#), with supervision from Chicago Partner [Peter Clarke](#).

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