

February 24, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Watershed Public Charter School in Windsor Mill, Maryland. I have had the pleasure of teaching Henry Riesner for the last 6 months. Henry is a creative and smart student who adds so much to our classroom community. It is not unusual to hear his classmates talk about how much they like him. When Henry is not in class, students immediately wonder where he is and there is a hole that is felt in our school family. We have been very lucky to have him in our class.

This has been my first experience in the classroom working with a student who has PANDAS. I have learned so much as an educator working with Henry daily. I have also realized how lucky I am that Henry has many of the supports and accommodations that he has. Having an extra set of hands in the classroom to help when Henry is a little amped up is important. His aide makes sure that I can concentrate on the rest of the class during times that Henry needs a little extra attention. She encourages him to do his best all the time and reminds him to stay on task during independent work. Without her there with him, my attention to other students would be taken away.

Henry is often able to multi-task during class. It is hard for him to sit still and listen to instruction without doing something with his hands. He often sits at his seat and draws during the lesson. However, when assessed on the information taught, he often has no problem completing the assignment successfully. With the additional assistant he is provided as well as the medicine he takes each day, he can access the curriculum with fewer barriers in the way.

Being proactive with his course of medicine, I know we have dodged some flairs that could have thrown our classroom community out of alignment. Being in constant communication with his mom, she knows almost immediately if he is off in the classroom. With this knowledge, she can provide additional medicine to make sure that Henry does not go too far off baseline. I can see a difference right away. Henry can continue to come to school each day and does not miss valuable instruction.

Through this experience, I have realized how important SB 475 is for Henry and other students who have been diagnosed with PANDAS. Having Henry in my classroom has helped me grow as a teacher. I am thankful every day that he is there. Without the support, provided by medicine as well as other therapies, that Henry receives, I know that our classroom would be a different place. I tell my students each day that my job is to keep them safe and their job is to keep it that way. The support that Henry is given helps me do that job as well as helping Henry do his job.

Sincerely,



Kristy Wiggins

2nd Grade Teacher

Watershed Public Charter School