



# *Special Education Law*

*Reed Martin, J.D.*

Our Mission is Lessening Discrimination against Children with Disabilities by Providing Parents and School Personnel Tools for Advocacy

## **A Message From Reed and Connie**

### **The End Of Another School Year - Take A Minute To Celebrate Your Successes**

It is the end of another school year and we want to salute you for your advocacy efforts. We have heard from so many of you about the success of one strategy or another that you tried -- and you deserve to take some time to celebrate.

In our workshops we always say "Celebrate your successes and share your successes with other parents." There are a lot of times that will get you down, so always take time to celebrate.

What you do in your advocacy not only means so much to your child in terms of what you are able to accomplish for them in school, but it also means so much for your life long relationship with your child. Reed and I both know as parents how many sacrifices you go through, how many strains there are in the home situation when one child always seems to need the most attention, but what that child learns is that they have a parent who puts them first. A parent that fights for them. A parent that will take on the world for them. A parent that advocates for them.

Some of you have youngsters who are graduating and with appropriate transition plans, for once, you have them on track for successful post-school experiences. We really appreciate how many of you share these personal stories with us. We are asked "is there life after the IDEA?" and the answer is in Section 504 and the ADA. As we say in our manuals, learn 504 and the ADA for the rest of your child's life.

But most of you have children who are graduating to the next grade, a new set of teachers, maybe a new building, maybe a new bus route, maybe a lot more fellow students, a new principal.... We have been through all these changes, with parents in all 50 states, so let us be the one constant in your world of changes.

Apparently you feel you get help from our website, conferences and materials because the number of parents we interact with continues to increase each day. Connie talks to, emails, chats, instant messages, faxes and answers bulletin board questions for several thousand parents each week. We always appreciate parents who say our website is different because we actually answer questions and do not talk down to them.

**We have developed so many true friends over the internet, and interact so frequently, that it is a funny feeling to realize we have actually met so few of you. We are now planning our 2001-2002 nationwide conference schedule and we hope to get to meet many more of you in person.**

**So congratulations for this year. Celebrate, but don't let your guard down too far. We will be here all summer with suggestions on what to do if your child is regressing in the absence of an appropriate program, or what to do if you think you have a lousy IEP for next Fall and want to do something before the next school year starts.**

**Keep us as part of your plans to make 2001-2002 the best school year your child has ever had.**

**Reed Martin is an attorney with 33 years experience in special education law.**