

Our haul has been and continues to be uphill, so I want to be the first to say "Congratulations!"

Some of us will remember a letter we drafted and sent to DPI back in March of 2007. The main gist of the letter was that "autism" as a disability category should be changed in the language of our state documents and guidelines to "Autism Spectrum Disorders."

Mark Sloan, me, Barb and Pam also went to Bismark to speak to DPI about this issue. After we made what we all considered a compelling case, they politely declined to change the state's position on the autism language.

In June 2009, I received some of the significant updates to NDs special education laws, which will go into effect the August. Below is one of the changes:

Changes: The most significant change to the North Dakota Century Code as it applies to autism is changing the term autism to autism spectrum disorder (N.D. Cent. Code § 23-09.4-1(1-3). All definitions within the code are framed to reflect this change. The code was updated as of the 61 Legislative Assembly and becomes effective after August 1, 2009.

I truly believe our hard work and consistent effort to have our state's code reflect language that is consistent with professional standards has paid off.

Our efforts starting back in 2006 are finally doing some good. There is still much to be done.

Kristen Wallman