

# Parent: Teaching aides must stay put, no matter what

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EDITOR

**WATCHUNG** - One resident says a lack of available substitute teachers is hurting students with special needs in Watchung schools.

Classroom and one-to-one aides were pulled from their classrooms or individual students several times over the past school year to serve as substitute teachers in other classrooms, Johnston

Drive resident Dorie Harvey said at a Wednesday, June 27, Board of Education meeting.

Harvey, who said parents brought the concern to the Board of Education in 2017, stated the problem only persisted this year. She said pulling aides from students violates those students' IEPs, or Individualized Education Plans.

"Using aides that are supposed to be with students to assist them as substitutes in other class-

rooms puts not only the teachers at risk, but all the students in the classroom, leaving us open for lawsuits," she said.

She requested the district make better use of its substitute staffing service, Source 4 Teachers, to ensure it has an appropriate number of substitutes available for each school day.

Otherwise, she said, the district should seek a different service or establish new protocols to account for teachers taking unex-

pected sick or personal days. She recommended the district look into using Frontline Education Absence Management, which she said has made a positive difference in the school district in which she works.

Board of Education President Margo Langer took note of the suggestion.

School districts across the country are dealing with a short-

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age of substitute teachers.

Facing such a shortage early in the 2017-2018 school year, the Warren Township Board of Education raised the daily

pay rate for substitutes in January to make the openings more attractive to candidates.

Woodland Road resident Jennifer Scharf said the school districts in both Warren and Bernards townships use

Frontline Education.

She said as a teacher with experience with both Frontline and Source 4 Teachers, Frontline is "a much better system, it's more hands on, and you know who's in the buildings."