

CHAPTER 345

EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SENATE BILL 19-215

BY SENATOR(S) Rodriguez, Crowder, Danielson, Fields, Ginal, Moreno, Story, Tate, Todd, Winter, Zenzinger;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Lontine, Buckner, Buentello, Caraveo, Cutter, Duran, Kipp, McCluskie, McLachlan,
Michaelson Jenet, Singer, Sirota, Titone, Valdez A.

AN ACT

**CONCERNING THE CREATION OF THE PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS CONFERENCE FOR PARENTS
OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add 22-20-120** as follows:

22-20-120. Parents encouraging parents conference - legislative declaration.

(1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(a) PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES OFTEN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN UNTIL THEIR DEATH;

(b) THERE ARE NO RESOURCES THAT ADEQUATELY PREPARE PARENTS FOR THE TASK OF SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES;

(c) PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES STRUGGLE TO OBTAIN TIME AWAY FROM CARING FOR THEIR CHILD IN ORDER TO GAIN PERSONAL INSIGHT AND SUPPORT FROM EACH OTHER WHILE LEARNING OF EDUCATIONAL, LEGAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES;

(d) BOTH PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS PLAY CRITICAL INTERACTIVE ROLES IN A CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND IN DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS;

(e) THE PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS CONFERENCE UNIQUELY MOTIVATES INTERPERSONAL AND INTRAPERSONAL INSIGHT THAT IS CRITICAL FOR SUCCESSFUL PARENT AND PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS;

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

(f) THE PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS PROGRAM WAS FOUNDED IN 1978 AND HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES; AND

(g) PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS PROGRAM EVALUATIONS HAVE SHOWN THAT PARTICIPATING PARENTS FEEL LESS ISOLATED THAN BEFORE PARTICIPATION AND FEEL MORE HOPEFUL AND EMPOWERED TO ENGAGE IN ADVOCACY FOR THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION AND LIFE PLANS.

(2) THEREFORE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO CONTINUE THE PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS PROGRAM FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

(3) SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDS, OR SUBJECT TO STATE APPROPRIATIONS, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE UP TO FOUR PARENTS ENCOURAGING PARENTS CONFERENCES, REFERRED TO IN THIS SECTION AS "CONFERENCE", PER YEAR. THE PARENTS OF A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND AS A COUPLE. ALTERNATIVELY, A PARENT IS ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND WITH A SUPPORT PERSON.

(4) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP AND FACILITATE AN APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE. AT A MINIMUM, A PERSON IS ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE IF HE OR SHE IS THE PARENT OF A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY.

(5) A CONFERENCE MUST BE PROVIDED OF SUFFICIENT LENGTH FOR CONTENT TO BE DELIVERED, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE OVERNIGHT STAY.

(6) A CONFERENCE SHALL BE HELD AT A VENUE EQUIPPED TO MEET REGIONAL CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT NEEDS.

(7) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE ALL CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS WITH LODGING AND FOOD, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FUNDING AND CONSISTENT WITH STATE FISCAL RULES.

(8) THE CONFERENCE CURRICULUM MUST INCLUDE TOPICS THAT ENABLE PARENTS TO EFFECTIVELY PARTNER WITH THEIR CHILDREN'S TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS TO PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH APPROPRIATE EDUCATION SERVICES SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE STAGES OF GRIEVING; SPECIAL EDUCATION IN COLORADO AND THE PROGRAM STANDARDS FOR PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS; AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY'S LEGAL RIGHTS UNDER THE FEDERAL "INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT", 20 U.S.C. 1400 ET SEQ., AS AMENDED, OR OTHER RELATED FEDERAL OR STATE LAWS; PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL WORK SESSIONS ON FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES; AND HOW PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY CAN ADVOCATE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

(9) THE CONFERENCE MUST PROVIDE PEER SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AT WORKING MEALS AND DURING BREAKS.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. For the 2019-20 state fiscal year, \$68,000 is appropriated to the department of education. This appropriation is from the general

fund. To implement this act, the department may use this appropriation for parents encouraging parents conferences.

SECTION 3. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Approved: May 29, 2019