

**House Education**

**04/04/2024 01:30 PM**

**HB24-1361 School District Open Enrollment Transparency**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Celeste Landry Amend themselves	<p>FYI - If possible, I will testify in person, but today's Title Board hearing may end up conflicting with the hearing on HB24-1361 Open Enrollment Transparency. Also, I sent Rep Frizell this amendment request a few days ago, but I didn't hear back so I don't know if she read my email.</p> <p>When I saw the title, I was excited to read the bill because I had an interesting experience with lack of transparency in open enrollment in my school district. I was surprised to see that HB1361 doesn't address the issue I encountered, and I would like to request an amendment to the bill.</p> <p>First, I want to say that I appreciate that the legislative declaration states its aim to reduce barriers to open enrollment for lower-income students, English language learners, and special education students. My daughters went to a Title I elementary school which was also a "choice" (100% open enrollment) school.</p> <p>I would like to suggest a simple amendment on page 5, line 8 as follows in regular sentence case:</p> <p>8 (4) A school district must clearly explain on the open enrollment application its algorithm for filling open enrollment slots. A SCHOOL DISTRICT IS ENCOURAGED TO ADOPT, IMPLEMENT,</p> <p>9 AND MAKE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON ITS WEBSITE POLICIES AND</p> <p>10 PROCEDURES FOR OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR PROGRAMS AND SCHOOLS</p> <p>11 WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THAT ARE</p> <p>12 CONSISTENT WITH THE STATE BOARD MODEL POLICY ADOPTED PURSUANT</p>

	<p>13 TO THIS SECTION.</p> <p>I don't think that "eligibility" and "prioritization" on page 4, lines 21-22, achieve this transparency.</p> <p>(g) INFORMATION REGARDING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CLEARLY STATED CRITERIA FOR STUDENT ELIGIBILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for instance, a bilingual elementary school may require that the child be bilingual to join in the 4th grade</li> </ul> <p>AND PRIORITIZATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for instance, a school district employee who lives out of district would get priority for their child in middle school over other out-of-district middle schoolers</li> </ul> <p>Many parents know that there are eligibility requirements and priorities, but they don't think to ask how to maximize the effectiveness of their open-enrollment choices. After I learned how my school district's algorithm worked, I gave people advice on how to "strategically" make their list of choices. I don't know if all school districts use the same algorithm, but all parents filling out an open-enrollment application should have access to that information!</p> <p>Thank you for considering this amendment.</p>
<p>Amie Baca-Oehlert Against Colorado Education Association</p>	<p>Good Afternoon, Madame Chair and Honorable Members of the Committee. My name is Amie Baca-Oehlert. I am a high school counselor and President of the Colorado Education Association representing nearly 40,000 educators across the state of Colorado. I am here today to speak in opposition of HB24-1361.</p> <p>While well-intentioned, HB 24-1361 is unnecessary. Open enrollment has existed as a choice for Colorado families for many years. This bill requires CDE to adopt a model policy for districts to follow in their open enrollment policy. This is a solution in search of a problem, especially when we know that open enrollment policies exacerbate inequality.</p> <p>Research shows that open enrollment is a band-aid on a deeply inequitable funding system that causes unintended harm to our most vulnerable students. Because neighborhood schools that serve more</p>

	<p>low-income families and students of color tend to be under-resourced, these schools often are lower performing. The thinking behind open enrollment policies is that families should be able to leave their failing districts and provide their children with a better education. Unfortunately, open enrollment really only gives more privileged families within those districts the opportunity to leave their districts. Because families must bear the burden of lengthy commutes to other districts, it is only families with the resources and capacity to make that happen. Students who have parents who work more than one job, or lack a personal vehicle aren't able to leave their districts. The students who leave the district take their per pupil funding with them, making funding challenges worse for those left behind. We need to be investing in improving the low-performing schools rather than encouraging families to leave.</p> <p>HB24-1361, and open enrollment as a concept, are well-intentioned. But the evidence is clear that these policies promote and sustain deep-rooted inequalities in our educational system. We need to move beyond old ideas and start prioritizing actually investing in all districts so that ALL students have access to a high quality education. For these reasons, CEA urges a NO vote today. Thank you.</p>
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