

Senate Education

02/16/2022 Upon Adjournment

SB22-127 Special Education Funding

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Maureen Welch  Amend  Self	<p>Wed 2/16/2022 Senate Education committee</p> <p>SB22-127 CONCERNING FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.</p> <p>My name is Maureen Welch, I live in Arapahoe County and am a registered Volunteer lobbyist at the Capitol and represent myself. I also hold a dual license for teaching general and special education in Colorado.</p> <p>I am the mother of three sons, who all received services or accommodations for their learning disabilities.</p> <p>My youngest son is in 8th grade and has multiple disabilities, which would be in Tier B currently for funding.</p> <p>I support this bill with the caveat that there are assurances that the funds will be used to directly support students or the school staff who support them. We do not need more administrators but rather need stability of staff for complex students.</p> <p>The amount per student is clear for Tier A students in the bill but not for Tier B, which are the students with more instruction, services and support needs.</p> <p>The current version of the bill is not specific and I recommend an amendment to ensure the funds go as close to the student for their special education instruction, supports and services.</p> <p>Thank you very much,</p> <p>Maureen Welch mpwelchco@gmail.com 720-436-4121</p>

<p>Seyanna Hitt For Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition</p>	<p>My name is Seyanna Hitt and I am here to reiterate Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition's support of SB 22-127. Special Educators are feeling undervalued, underappreciated and under-resourced. The pandemic is placing an unbearable strain on schools, and this burden is especially felt in SPED departments. Remote learning makes certain accommodations impossible. Many IEPs require one on one time with a trusted adult, additional lesson resources, extended time for testing/assignments as well as individualized accommodations for students who have visual and hearing impairments. Many students who need all of this do not even have access to basic technology to complete their daily lessons. Educators, school administrators and students need more than empty promises and praise to succeed in creating equitable learning environments. Special education is the harbinger of equity in schools. Unfortunately, teachers frequently do not have the resources to fulfill the requirements of an IEP. My husband taught a hearing impaired student who required access to a hearing device that the SPED budget was not able to afford at the time. This student missed essential instruction that was important for her ability to understand fundamental math concepts. Even though my husband tried his hardest to reteach the lesson content, he had classes that were so large that not every student could even have their own desk. Due to the lack of funding this student missed out on fundamental concepts and was denied a fair opportunity in education. In the current environment of teacher shortages, students are frequently not able to receive extended time for testing, smaller classroom sizes, and special education specific courses and/or accommodations. An additional \$500 per student would boost the SPED departments capabilities substantially and be a game changer for students with disabilities. Creating equity in schools is a long uphill battle that needs to be universal in every facet of education from teacher training to, hiring more teachers with disabilities and teachers of color, and increasing funding for school budgets with an emphasis on SPED departments. Thank you for your time today.</p>
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### **Position Statement for SB 22-127**

The Arc of Colorado promotes and protects the human and civil rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and actively promotes their full inclusion in the community throughout their lifetimes. With over 2,500 members, there are 14 local chapters of The Arc serving 9,500 people annually.

### **Please Vote YES on SB 22-127**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that students with disabilities who are found eligible for special education and related services must have an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) that is reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress in light of the child's circumstances. Every student has a right to be educated in their inclusive neighborhood school and in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate. Any exception should be rare and considered only when education in the general education classroom cannot be satisfactorily achieved. Each student has a right to the related services, supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications needed to learn alongside students without disabilities. In order to achieve this goal, special education must be adequately funded. This is why The Arc of Colorado strongly supports Senate Bill 22-127. This bill will put school district's closer to a position of adequate funding which will lead to better supports and services for students with disabilities in less restrictive environments and more integrated settings.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and please vote **YES** on SB 22-127.

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