

COLORADO STATE SENATE

MAJORITY OFFICE



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Sen. Zenzinger champions education, advances four education policies



DENVER -- Education was the word today for Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arvada, who moved forward four education policies.

"Every child in Colorado deserves a quality education; and the closer we get to that goal, the more fully this state will reap the rewards," said Sen. Zenzinger. "Education is the foundation of our economy. It drives innovation and gives us the tools to achieve our goals. These four bills illustrate my commitment to education policies that are efficient and effective."

SB 14-167: OPPORTUNITY SCHOOLS / ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CAMPUSES

On a bipartisan vote, the Senate approved SB 14-167, establishing the Opportunity School Pilot Initiative, which will provide additional resources for alternative education campuses. "Opportunity schools" or "alternative education campuses" serve high-risk students who fall into categories such as dropout; expelled; adjudicated youth; pregnant or parenting; drug or alcohol abuse; or insufficient credits, for example. This bill must now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

SB 14-150: SCHOOL COUNSELORS

On a bipartisan vote, the Senate approved SB 14-150, which addresses the insufficient number of school counselors in Colorado public schools. The current ratio of students to school counselors is nearly 400-1. To improve that ratio, this bill invests in the effective School Counselor Corps Grant Program by doubling the total annual grants available to \$10 million from \$5 million, and increasing the duration of the grants. In addition, it expands eligibility to all middle and high schools. This bill must now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

SB 14-124: TURNAROUND SCHOOLS

The Senate gave initial approval for legislation that helps schools classified as “turnaround schools” -- those facing possible closure pending successful turnaround to “satisfactory” status within five years. SB 14-124 establishes the School Turnaround Leaders Development Program, allowing school districts or charters to apply for grants to train or recruit leaders to manage school turnaround efforts. The Senate must still approve this bill on a third and final reading.

SB 14-185: RESOURCES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Senate Education Committee approved SB 14-185, which establishes a pilot “Pay for Success” program. Through the Pay for Success program, philanthropists can invest capital in early learning and development programs to help kids under 5 years old. If the programs meet specified conditions of success, the philanthropist can recoup his or her initial investment from the state. If the program is unsuccessful, the government pays nothing. Next, this bill goes to the entire Senate for a vote.

ABOUT SEN. ZENZINGER:

Sen. Rachel Zenzinger serves Colorado Senate District 19, which spans most of Arvada and the Jefferson County portion of Westminster. She was appointed to her seat and sworn into office on Dec. 13, 2013. She serves on the Senate Education Committee, Senate Local Government Committee and she is a Senate advisor to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Her professional background is in education, and she was coordinator of the Regis University Master of Arts in Education program. She worked four years for Catholic Charities of Denver. For more information about Sen. Zenzinger, please go to www.RachelForColorado.com or call her at 303-866-4840.