



The Denver  
Foundation

March 28, 2022

Support for HB22-1202: At-risk Student Measure for School Finance

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

On behalf of The Denver Foundation, we are writing to ask that you vote yes on House Bill 22-1202, sponsored by Representative Leslie Herod, Representative Julie McCluskie, Senator Rachel Zenzinger, and Senator James Coleman.

The Denver Foundation is a community foundation with a long-standing history of funding nonprofit organizations working to ensure further funding for education is equitable and meets the needs of students across the Metro Denver region. We believe that access to a well-funded and racially equitable education system is critical for communities in Metro Denver to thrive.

The Legislative Interim Committee on School Finance has worked diligently with stakeholders to understand the efficacy of the existing measures that the State of Colorado uses to identify low-income students needing financial resources to support their academic endeavors.

According to the Urban Institute's research report that helped inform HB22-1202, the existing approach to understanding at-risk students may not fully capture students who live in economically disadvantaged communities and are thus in need of additional academic support and resources. Additionally, evidence from the Urban Institute's report highlights that additional K-12 funding can improve short and long-term educational outcomes for students from low-income families by providing more dollars for such students' needs. Updating the current approach to identify students most in need of support will further access resources to further their educational opportunities.

The Denver Foundation applauds the efforts of Rep. Herod, Rep. McCluskie, Sen. Zenzinger, Sen. Coleman, and the members of the Interim Committee on School Finance for their work and respectfully requests a yes vote on HB22-1202.

Javier Alberto Soto  
President and CEO

Dace West  
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Naomi Amaha  
Director of Policy and Gov. Affairs

Senate Education

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HB22-1202 At-risk Student Measure For School Finance

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Leah Charney For Self	<p>My name is Leah Charney and I am the parent of a kindergartener in HD 8. Many thanks to the committee for reading my testimony and to my elected officials Rep. Herod and Sen. Coleman for co-sponsoring this bill. As you likely all know, when we look at true costs and take into account regional differences in cost of living and expenditures, Colorado ranks 43rd in spending on education. We are nearly at the bottom of what other states provide to their student citizens; this is further exacerbated at the city and county level. The existing formula for school finance doesn't impact need at the student level but instead paints broad strokes by providing economically advantaged students with more funding. As the parent at a Title I school where I am also the chair of our Collaborative School Committee — a state mandated group each school has that may be called a School Accountability Committee or by other names in other school districts — I have seen firsthand how educational funding impacts schools and students at the local and individual level. A Title I school means we have a high incidence of poverty and at-risk students. Our district is one where we are in the center of the two issues being discussed by this bill: We live in a place where the cost of living is high and continues to grow; we also live in a place where educational funding has not kept pace and we have to do more with our high need students but with less funding and staffing. What we need is an update to the formula that prioritizes getting resources to the most disadvantaged. Our students need support — we know this. The current formula, even with recent updates, still sends a disproportionate amount of funding to students not living in poverty or with disabilities or needs for IEPs and other specialized education. Educational opportunities should not be based on zip code but instead based on actual need. We know our actual needs. Thank you for considering HB 22-1202 and helping us to pair funding with the students who are most in need and to those often do not have parents or other trusted adults with the ability to provide supplemental support.</p>