

Submitter: Donna Bleiler
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB575

I OPPOSE SB 575. There is no doubt disabled students need better, but a one-size-fits-all isn't the way to get better educational results. The special needs students I have known would revolt to structure.

This bill directs Department of Education to develop and implement statewide education plan for students who are eligible for special education and who have experienced disproportionate results in education due to historical practices. Requires school districts to establish special education advisory council. Authorizes use of moneys from Student Investment Account for councils. Requires all statewide education plans to include strategies that provide for alignment with other statewide education plans

A student requires special education because the child has been evaluated as having one of the following conditions:

- (a) Intellectual disability;
- (b) Hearing impairment, including difficulty in hearing and deafness;
- (c) Speech or language impairment;
- (d) Visual impairment, including blindness;
- (e) Deaf-blindness;
- (f) Emotional disturbance;
- (g) Orthopedic or other health impairment;
- (h) Autism;
- (i) Traumatic brain injury; or
- (j) Specific learning disabilities.

This involves 1,000 students with disabilities. Combine this bill with SB 819, which requires all student have a full school day taught by a qualified licensed teacher, except by written parental consent, this cost for these students will be astronomical.

Some students have only been able to tolerate 25 minutes a week of instruction, according to the bill sponsor. The bill implies a one-size-sits-all plan developed by the State Board of Education advisory group made up of special education students from each category along with parents and stakeholders. Where are the trained experts? These student will need an individualized work plan as each respond in different ways, and to keep their attention for a full school day will mean hiring a teacher for each child when there is already a teacher shortage.