

# COLORADO STATE SENATE

MAJORITY OFFICE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Helping high-risk, alternative education students



DENVER – A bill to improve alternative education campus access and outcomes is one step closer to clearing the Colorado Senate. This morning, the Senate Education Committee approved SB 14-167, sponsored by Senator Rachel Zenzinger, D-Arvada.

Alternative education campuses serve high-risk students who fall into one or more of these categories: dropout, expelled, adjudicated youth, pregnant/parenting, drug/alcohol abuse, insufficient credits, and more.

“This bill has two big goals -- to help these high-risk students attain a high school diploma or equivalency, and to improve their chances of success in post-secondary education opportunities and in their chosen career fields,” said Sen. Zenzinger, a former alternative education teacher.

SB 14-167 creates the Opportunity Schools Pilot Initiative, which will provide additional funding for alternative education campuses. Schools that apply to participate in the initiative must describe the model that they will implement to serve high-risk students and must include at least two of the following three elements:

1. High-quality college and career-ready instruction that includes strong academic and social support services;
2. Programs to build college and career-ready skills and to provide informed counseling to assist students in the transition from high school to postsecondary enrollment; and
3. Appropriate support for students in the first year of postsecondary enrollment to improve chances of postsecondary persistence and success.

Sen. Zenzinger is also advocating for Colorado students through her School Turnaround Leaders Development Program (SB 14-124) and School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SB 14-150). Gov. Hickenlooper has already signed into law her bill (HB 14-1208) allowing specific rural school districts to continue providing special education programs through cost-effective partnerships.

SB 14-167 passed the Senate Education Committee on a 4-3 vote and now goes to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration.

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**About Sen. Rachel 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. For more information about Sen. Zenzinger, please go to [www.RachelForColorado.com](http://www.RachelForColorado.com) or call her at 303-866-4840.