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**Testimony on SB 451**  
**Senate Education Committee**  
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Students with disabilities are being included in all facets of public education due to increased knowledge and understanding of the benefits of inclusion, legislation (including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB)), court rulings, and human rights advocacy. As the result of an increased presence of children with special needs in the general education classroom, all teachers should expect they will have the opportunity to work with students with special needs.

This unprecedented access to regular education is successful only if teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in providing the educational services outlined in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Adapting instruction for students with disabilities, managing the behavior of students with and without disabilities, and collaborating with special education teachers are important skills for general educators. Yet many teachers completed their professional preparation at a time when few students with disabilities were taught in general education classes. Even among teachers who were recently prepared, many training gaps remain. Most general education teachers received very little any pre-service preparation beyond an all too general "Introduction to Special Education" or a similar survey course. Additionally many teachers receive an Alternative Education certification. These programs are typically even less time and programmatically intensive than those at traditional universities.

When students with disabilities are placed in regular education classrooms with teachers who do not have adequate training or experience teaching students with disabilities, students do not get the supports or modifications they need to be successful. Furthermore, schools rarely use their staff development days to provide training to general education teachers regarding teaching students with disabilities even though regular education teachers often require additional training and support to successfully include students with disabilities in regular education classes

SB 451 will require school districts to provide research based training for regular education teachers who provide instruction to students with disabilities on the recommendation of the Admission Review and Dismissal Committee (ARD). Under current law, a student's ARD Committee is charged with determining the type of skills and training that is required by an educator to implement a student's IEP. SB 451 would simply allow the ARD Committee to recommend the types of research based training required by a teacher in order to ensure that a teacher possesses the appropriate skill and knowledge to appropriately implement a student's IEP. The ARD

committee would not identify the specific teacher but would identify the type of teacher and/or the need for specific types of training required or the committee could decide that all of the educators who will implement a student's IEP need training, especially if there is a behavior issue that applies to all classes a student attends.

SB 451 would also allow general education teachers to utilize current staff development days to receive training regarding teaching students with disabilities. This is critical, because staff development for general education teachers is usually devoted to subject matter content. SB 451 would provide an avenue to require a teacher to obtain necessary training to serve students with disabilities.

One of the most frequent complaints our agency hears from families is that their children have been placed in classrooms with teachers who know little or nothing about their child's needs and have not received adequate training regarding how to implement the student's IEP or to respond to their child's behavior in a way that minimizes rather than escalates that behavior. SB 451 will help to address this concern in a manner that will benefit both students and teachers.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

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