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Legislation Addressing the Gap in Funding for Special Needs Placements Passed Unanimously

Park Ridge, IL - Yesterday the Illinois Senate passed HB4365, which addresses concerns raised by Illinois students, parents, and school districts about the process to find a suitable placement for students with significant special needs. The bill passed the House earlier this month, and will now head to the Governor's desk for his signature.

The legislation, sponsored by Representative Daniel Didech (D - Buffalo Grove) and Senator Laura Fine (D - Glenview), ensures that home districts will be reimbursed for non-ISBE approved placements in the event that all ISBE approved placements are exhausted. Funding from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Grant (IDEA) will be used to reimburse home districts. The bill also streamlines the placement process so the student's IEP team can approve those placements without an unnecessary due process hearing.

"This legislation will ensure that students with the most significant special needs will finally receive an appropriate placement without bankrupting our local schools or forcing their families into costly and unnecessary litigation", says House Sponsor Representative Didech. "I am grateful that all stakeholders worked collaboratively and professionally to produce legislation that meets the needs of our schools and families of children with special needs."

This bill comes at a time when school districts and families are struggling to find facilities that can adequately provide services to students due to staffing shortages and limited space caused by the COVID19 pandemic. Although these barriers to service still exist, HB4365 diminishes the financial burden experienced locally and will streamline the placement process for families.

"Parents who have students that require residential placements deserve the peace of mind that their child will be placed in a facility in a timely manner", says Senate Sponsor Senator Fine. "HB 4365 will help ensure students have a proper placement to ensure their continued health and safety while they pursue their education."

"The passage of this legislation is a victory that moves us closer to ensuring the needs of our students with special needs are met and that every student in Illinois receives a quality education" said Bridget Peach, Executive Director of ED-RED.

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If you would like more information regarding HB4365 please contact Bridget Peach at 847-692-8047 or bridget@ed-red.org.