From:	Courtney Deist
To:	K12 Budget
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Hello.

My name is Courtney Deist and I am a teacher in the state of Kansas.

The need for more special education funding in the state of Kansas is critical. Currently, our SPED teachers are dealing with unsustainable caseload sizes. Between the increasing academic, behavior, and physical needs of our students, the teachers are unable to provide adequate services. There are IEP support minutes going unmet because the teacher has to prioritize one need over another due to there being 20+ students on their caseload. Not only is this causing a disservice to the student, but it's also causing legal issues since IEPs are legal documents. For the special education services to truly be effective, teachers need to have a smaller caseloads to be able to give students the interventions they need to be successful.

In addition to the SPED teachers having unmanageable caseloads, we are also severely lacking support staff. Because SPED funding is so low, districts are unable to pay paras & support staff a livable wage. There are so many incredible & knowledgeable humans who serve in these roles but are unable to stay long term because they need to be able to pay their bills. I have teacher friends all over the state of Kansas who are constantly sharing that their district is hiring paras. Similar to the unmet needs from the SPED teachers, student support minutes that are stated on IEPs are going unmet as well. Again, not only causing a disservice to the student, but a legal document to be broken.

Something needs to be done immediately. We have students in intermediate grades who don't know how to read. We have students in intermediate grades who don't know basic math skills and facts. We have students in every grade with awful self regulation skills. Our state needs to take action and fully fund special education. A state with fully funded education, general education AND special education is a state worth living in. It's a state worth being proud of. It's worth the cost.

Thank you.

Courtney Deist