

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2189 (Nguyen) – As Amended April 27, 2026

Policy Committee:	Human Services	Vote:	6 - 0
	Education		8 - 0

Urgency: No                      State Mandated Local Program: No                      Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (Council) to establish and administer a Statewide Special Education Parent Advocacy Collaborative (Collaborative) for the purpose of building statewide capacity for parent and pupil engagement in special education advocacy, systems change, and policy development. The bill appropriates \$800,000 from the General Fund (GF) annually for three years for this purpose.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Council to conduct a competitive grant process to award \$800,000 annually for three fiscal years to an eligible nonprofit statewide advocacy organization.
- 2) Appropriates \$800,000 from the GF to the Council for each of fiscal years 2027-28, 2028-29 and 2029-30.
- 3) Authorizes the Council to retain an unspecified amount to administer the grant.
- 4) Requires the grantee conduct outreach and training through meetings or forums for the purpose of providing parent leaders, student advocates, and other stakeholders, inclusive of postsecondary students, with culturally and linguistically responsive information regarding statewide special education advocacy for the purpose of systems advocacy, capacity building, and systems change.
- 5) Requires the grant be awarded through a competitive process that includes public solicitation of applications and an evaluation based on established criteria, including demonstrated experience in statewide special education advocacy, coalition building, advocacy on behalf of the disability community, and working with existing entities providing training and support to parents of pupils with disabilities.
- 6) Specifies the tasks of the grantee, including, among other items, to identify and build a network of at least 200 leader stakeholders engaged in advocacy for students with disabilities, establish and facilitate a statewide collaborative, develop and implement a statewide training program, provide technical assistance, and collect, analyze, and document the experiences of parents and pupils to inform state-level policymaking, oversight, and systems improvements.
- 7) Requires the grantee to establish measurable outcomes aligned with statewide accountability systems.

- 8) Requires the grantee to submit an annual report to the Council, and the Council to submit a report to the Legislature by December 31, 2030, as specified, and to post the report on the Council's website.

#### **FISCAL EFFECT:**

One-time General Fund (GF) costs of \$2.4 million over three years to the Council to establish the Collaborative and fund a grant to an eligible nonprofit statewide advocacy organization, including \$1.3 million for staffing, \$900,000 for organizing, training, and technical assistance, \$60,000 for digital infrastructure, communications and data collection, and \$150,000 for grant administration, evaluation and reporting.

This bill contains an \$800,000 annual GF appropriation for fiscal years 2027-28, 2028-29, and 2029-30 for this purpose and specifies the Council may retain an unspecified amount for administrative purposes.

The author has submitted a state budget request for \$800,000 per year for the next three fiscal years to fund this effort.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

#### **COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

With oversight and enforcement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shifting onto the California Department of Education it is more important now than ever for California to develop a coordinated infrastructure that unifies and trains parent leaders statewide on how they can stand up for the rights of students with disabilities. As a mother of a child with special needs, I know firsthand how complex and overwhelming the special education system can be. Parents should not have to navigate it alone. [This bill] ensures families have access to training, support, and a coordinated voice so we can protect the rights of students with disabilities and help ensure the system is working for families.

- 2) **Background.** Federal law requires each state to establish a state council on developmental disabilities to advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities. State councils are federally funded and receive federal grants to address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities within their state. To qualify for federal funding, a state council must submit a state plan detailing priorities, strategies, and planned projects. Federal law requires members be appointed by the Governor and at least 60% of the members must be individuals with developmental disabilities or their family members. California law establishes the Council as the state planning council responsible for developing the California Developmental Disabilities State Plan and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan. The Governor appoints the Council's 31 members.

According to The Arc of California, the bill's sponsor:

For decades, the federal government has played a central role in overseeing and enforcing the rights of students with disabilities through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, administered by the Office of Special Education Programs within the U.S. Department of Education. However, recent federal actions have significantly weakened this oversight. Families are already feeling the impact. In 2025, from March to September alone, the Department received 9,269 civil rights complaints, of which 6,353, or 68 percent, were dismissed without resolution. As federal capacity diminishes, responsibility for enforcement is increasingly shifting to states, local education agencies, and ultimately to parents and self-advocates.

California has strong local infrastructure through Family Empowerment Centers, Family Resource Centers and other community-based organizations. However, local organizations train and organize parents, but that doesn't necessarily translate into coordination and action in Sacramento. What California lacks is a coordinated, statewide advocacy structure focused on systemic change. [This bill] is designed to fill this gap. Rather than duplicating individual advocacy efforts, the bill focuses on building a statewide coalition of leaders drawn from local networks across California who can engage in coordinated, systems-level advocacy.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Jennifer Swenson / APPR. / (916) 319-2081