

February 22, 2013

## Testimony Regarding House Bill 2756

Danielle Sheldrake, Director of Special Education, Beaverton School District

Thank you Ms. Chair Gelser and the Members of the House Education Committee for the opportunity to testify today about HB 2756 regarding the use of Safe Rooms/Seclusion Cells. My name is Danielle Sheldrake and I am the Director of Special Education for the Beaverton School District. I have been an educator for thirteen years and a special education director for five years.

I am here today because I am extremely concerned about the impact of HB 2756 on the provision of special education services to students with disabilities. Schools are mandated to serve all students with disabilities regardless of the severity of their behavior which includes students who engage in violent behavior that can cause serious bodily injury to themselves, other students and staff. The Beaverton School District has been able to successfully meet the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs of students who exhibit extremely aggressive behaviors through the use of highly trained staff, and behavior interventions, including the use of seclusion rooms when they are necessary to ensure the safety of the students and others.

I strongly believe that House Bill 2756 will have a significant and negative impact on the students and staff in my district for the following reasons:

- First, there will be an increased amount of injury to staff and students, because when seclusion is prohibited there will be an increased use of restraint with students which is a more physical intervention .
- Second, there will be an increase in the number of students placed in more restrictive settings, such as homebound instruction, because building staff will not be able to safely manage students who engage in physically aggressive behavior. Our district will not be able to provide many of these students with a free appropriate public education in their current school placements.
- Lastly, the Beaverton School District will have even greater difficulty finding high quality teachers and classified staff who are willing to work with students with aggressive behaviors. If staff are no longer able to utilize our safe rooms and will have no choice but to resort to the use of restraint to address physically aggressive behaviors of students, many exceptional teachers and instructional assistants will not be willing to work with these students because of a concern for their own personal safety. Without high quality teachers and support staff, we put our students at greater risk of injury.

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**District Goal for 2010-2015:** All students will show continuous progress toward their personal learning goals, developed in collaboration with teachers and parents, and will be prepared for post-secondary education and career success.

The Beaverton School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups. It is the policy of the Beaverton School District that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, marital status, age, veterans' status, genetic information or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment.

The current OAR 581-021-0553, the Restraint and Seclusion law, sufficiently addresses the criteria for the use of seclusion and expectations for continuous monitoring during seclusion. I believe the current law addresses seclusion concerns and that HB 2756 will result in unintended harmful consequences for staff and students. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.

Sincerely,



Danielle Sheldrake  
Director of Special Education  
Beaverton School District