

March 4, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a teacher of students with Visual Impairments, working for the Southern Oregon ESD. I have recently become aware of HB 2755 that is being considered by the legislature that will impact my students. The funding under question is known as BVIS funds, and I am concerned that delegating this funding away from children with visual impairments will be doing these children a disservice.

Until the BVIS funds were made available to our program, we were suffering from insufficient funds to provide services, due to budget cuts from the recession. With this funding we have been able to upgrade outdated teaching materials (assessments and curriculum), purchase technology (IPADS, Electronic Braille note taking devices, magnifiers) to help our students become competitive and meet the academic standards demanded of the state and school districts. In addition, I have been able to attend in-service trainings that I could not afford to pay for due to years of furlough days and reduced salary.

These funds are a direct result of the closure of the School for the Blind. By eliminating the school, students with vision impairments lost an opportunity for enrichment activities that were provided during the summer at the school. With the BVIS funds we have been able to provide some enrichment activities locally. For example, last summer we had an independent living "camp" at the Southern Oregon University campus for high school students. These students were able to learn about a college campus, live in an apartment for 5 days, cook their own meals, and participate in discussions with other students with visual impairments. We also have been able to provide other field trips throughout the school year.

I am worried that by diverting money to fund "vision screening" in the state, the BVIS funds will dwindle quickly, impacting the programs in the state that serve students with visual impairments.

Sincerely,  
Susan Boigon  
Teacher of the Vision Impaired  
So. Oregon ESD  
[susan\\_boigon@soesd.k12.or.us](mailto:susan_boigon@soesd.k12.or.us)