



OREGON
Alliance
of Children's Programs

11 March 2013

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

SUPPORTING

HB 2956 – Amending Payments for Education Services for Children in Day Treatment and Psychiatric Residential Facilities

Chair Gelser and Committee Members,

I am Janet Arenz, Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. We are a statewide non-profit, supporting good budgets and good policies for children and families, so that we can make children Oregon's greatest asset.

We do this by representing \$205 million in small businesses, delivering services and programs for over 100,000 children. We have a payroll of \$152 million for 5,500 employees and raise \$35 million in philanthropic resources each year.

Member programs span child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, addiction, runaway and homeless, developmental disabilities and prevention.

The funding formula and methodology for what is known as Long Term Care and Treatment (children in certain mental health programs) was set in statute more than 35 years ago, and never has a change been made to those statutes.

HB 2956, for the first time, provides necessary funding changes for these very special programs who serve very special children.

Counter to the funding for these services, Long Term Care and Treatment programs have evolved significantly over the last 35 years. They are rich with evidence-based programs and practices; children are in less restrictive environments; and providers are delivering more effective services with more significant outcomes. Higher rates of children are returning home, and are able to live and function (with these services) at levels which make their ability to succeed in school much greater.

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Thus, education services for these children are deeply woven into their care, and their academic outcomes are equally important to their clinical outcomes.

Oregon made major changes to the clinical system 8 years ago, and now the education funding and delivery system needs to catch up.

In every legislative session during the last 35 years we have affirmed our recognition of the importance of children achieving educational success. We have prioritized funding, policies, and practices that create environments for success. But in each of those years, Oregon has rarely talked about these children. And even when we did, no changes were made.

With the clear recommendations of the 2008 Parrish Report commissioned by the Oregon Department of Education, and including the collaborative work of school districts and providers, we bring to you nothing short of a historic opportunity to recognize these children's needs and the advancements of providers to meet them.

Please move HB 2956.

Thank you,

Janet D Arenz, Executive Director
Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs