

Jutta Benner

1150 W. 15th Ave#203

Eugene, Or 97402

Tel 541-603-8627

House Commi9ttee on Education

Capitol Hill

Salem, Oregon

RE: HB 2756- Prohibit the Use of "Seclusion Rooms" in Elementary Schools

Dear Committee,

100 feet from where I live is an Elementary school that uses "Seclusion Rooms" for our youngest children who "misbehave".

I was never aware of this fact and the inhuman treatment to our littlest students.

An article in the *Eugene Weekly* appeared on December 20, 2013, reporting ~~the~~ on Seclusion Rooms and a child. A copy is attached. Since then I spoke to two principals.

I viewed seclusion rooms. My request to speak to a Superintendent was not granted.

There is no child on Earth that inherits a gene to become "misbehaved". First and foremost the parents are to blame, then the schools and all of society.

There could be many reasons of why a child "misbehaves", or better expressed, a child has a REACTION to a CAUSE and acts up. We must look much deeper into a child's life and environment of what the cause could be, identify it and heal that child.

Today's children are bombarded with toxins in the air, in their foods, in school and at home, and EMF's- (electromagnetic frequency) that damages a child's (and our) health and much more.

By knowing what the causes are that cause severe reactions, we become to know an awareness that is little known by doctors and professionals. Why? It's not in their school books.

They are "modern causes and diseases". They need a deep look into.

I personally suffer from some of the causes that include toxins in air, foods and detergents, smells, EMF's. Modern Western medication that sends me to the Emergency Room.

I have found natural remedies, self-studied these for 22 years, to eliminate REACTIONS that I have. I am healthy now.

I am bringing awareness to you and I am sharing this Truth with you in the following list of *causes* that could trigger severe *reaction* in a child.

CAUSES:

- **Hunger**
- **Homelessness**
- **No safe home**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Parents on drugs**
- **Parents on alcohol**
- **Parents have no job, no money, no health insurance**
- **Both parents work- no one at home**
- **Reaction to Western medication and their side effects**
- **Foods sprayed with toxins**
- **Sugar in foods and food coloring (identified as CAUSE of children with ADD/restlessness)**
- **Formaldehyde in furniture, beds**
- **Toxic detergents: laundry and cleaning**
- **Fluoride in water**
- **drinking water harmful**
- **clothes that cannot breathe: nylon, polyester, rayon**
- **violence on TV**
- **violence in Video Games**
- **violence in films**
- **EMF= damaging electronic frequencies in home and school caused by computers,**
- **TV, stereo equipment, cell phones**
- **Harmful microwave ovens destroying the composition of foods for proper digestion**
- **EMF- outdoor overland electric wires in Eugene (causes leukemia)**

- Newer Schools built with steel and steel roofs: cannot breathe, are harmful
- “State of the Art” air circulation in schools, missing natural circulation
- 15 spewing industries in and around Eugene (asthma)
- Grasses and sports areas sprayed with weed killers etc
- Claustrophobia in small rooms
- Nightmares
- Fear put into children by parents and school
- Racial hatred and slurs
- Utterly bored with an out-dated school system

How is a young child supposed to cope with all this?
It is devastating to say the least!

Please suspend, prohibit and throw out HB# 2756: “Seclusion Rooms” in our
Elementary Schools in Eugene and Oregon.

Thank you for caring for our little, innocent children who need us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jutta Benner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jutta Benner

USE OF SECLUSION ROOMS AT 4J CHALLENGED

The recent tragic Sandy Hook school shooting has called attention not only to gun control, but also to how the U.S. deals with young people who are behaviorally or mentally challenged. One controversial method that some Eugene 4J schools are using to deal with students in its behavioral programs is to put them in seclusion rooms.

Jennifer Harrison said her son Jared, who has attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and was placed in the behavioral program at McCornack Elementary, was repeatedly put in a seclusion room and had restraint used upon him from first through fourth grades. The room, 12-year-old Jared said, had carpeted walls, a peephole and a screen with a timer. The 15-minute timer started when a he became quiet, he said. Jared told EW he thinks the longest he had to stay in the room was two hours, and he was in the room sometimes twice a day.

Seclusion room data that Harrison obtained from 4J shows that in 2010-11 the district used seclusion more than 200 times at elementary schools including Cesar Chavez, McCornack, Twin Oaks and Camas Ridge.

"The most important thing isn't our particular story, it is numbers of reported restraint and seclusion," Harrison said.

Harrison, who is trained in special education herself, said the information about Jared's experiences came to light one day at the end of his fourth grade year in 2010 when she was called to pick him up early. Since it was the end of the day, she bypassed the office and went straight to his classroom. She heard his screaming from the hallway, and upon entering the classroom, she found two teachers sitting on him. Jared was not allowed to return to school after the incident.

A review of the 4J restraint and seclusion procedures used on Jared, conducted by a retired administrator, found no wrongdoing on the part of the school, according to a letter to Harrison from former superintendent George Russell.

Harrison filed a request for a special education due process hearing with the Oregon Department of Education in July of 2010, saying Jared was denied a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. An Office of Administrative Hearings judge found in October 2011 that the district did not provide Jared with a free appropriate education and needed

among other things, meet with Harrison to discuss transitioning Jared back to school, complete a behavioral support plan and give one hour per week in social skills instruction, including

says, "Sometimes I would kick and scream at the doors and try anything I could to get out."

One of Jared's incident reports from 2008, which calls the seclusion room a "safe room," said that "he was in the room quiet for about 48 seconds before he began to cry uncontrollably. He was screaming that he was scared and that he could see faces." When he was allowed to sit outside the room, "still weeping," he pulled a loose tooth out of his mouth and, saying he had blood in his mouth, "demanded to rinse out his mouth." The report says he went to the sink and did so "without permission" but returned to his seat.

Harrison said it wasn't until her legal case to try to get Jared help and back in school began that she understood the full extent of what was happening to Jared. She said, "I still don't know how many times Jared was restrained and secluded." But she points to the beginning of the use of seclusion as a time when Jared regressed to thumbsucking and bathroom accidents. Jared, who is now 12, says, "At the time I was scared of being alone."

Harrison said she acknowledges that Jared's behavior was problematic. "My son was having many behavior problems at school, and I do not dispute this, but yelling obscenities, not following directions or even threatening does not qualify as 'imminent threat of serious bodily harm.'"

According to 4J spokesperson Kerry Delf, "The Oregon Department of Education provides guidelines for the use of seclusion rooms to ensure student safety and support. These guidelines state that the use of seclusion rooms is permitted only as a part of a behavioral support plan when other less restrictive interventions would not be effective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others."

Harrison says, "My son's behavior is shocking, but it's important to note that there is not one incident where there was a real threat of serious danger, after all he was just a little guy."

The use of seclusion rooms is controversial. Harrison said it is something people expect to see in prisons and mental hospitals but not elementary schools. A 2011 study of restraint and seclusion in children and adolescents in a psychiatric journal said a systematic review of the past 10 years of literature on the subject found only seven studies, and "there is some indication that seclusion and restraints can lead to severe psychological and physical consequences."

Jared is now attending school through HomeSource Charter School, however HomeSource and Bethel schools just announced the charter school will close at the end of this school year.

Harrison said it was hard for her to get over feeling guilty for not protecting Jared. She is still fighting to get Jared back in school and get him the counseling and

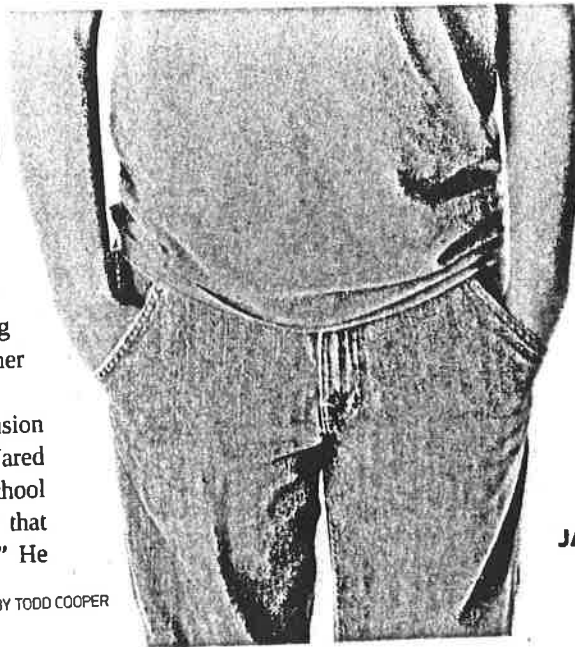


How to handle conflict resolution, self-advocacy, problem-solving strategies, self-soothing strategies, dealing with authority, appropriately expressing emotion, and organizational skills."

The judge also ruled Jared should get 30 minutes per week in counseling dealing with anxiety, trauma or other related issues.

When asked if the seclusion room traumatized him, Jared said, "Since that's how school started for me, I thought that was just how school was." He

PHOTO BY TODD COOPER



in April will hear the most recent petition filed with the Lane County Circuit Court.

Harrison said it helps Jared to talk about what happened, and she wants to make sure other people know about the use of restraint and seclusion because it affects not only the students who are placed in the rooms, but also the other kids who see and think "this is how the 'different' kids get treated. Everyone knew what was happening to the kids in Room 7."

— Camilla Mortensen

JARED HARRISON