

from the desk of
Rep. Sara Gelser
SMJ



Support Education Services for Oregon's Medically Fragile Children Vote Yes on HB 4009

House Bill 4009 provides for a continuation of education services for a unique population of children at the Providence Child Center (PCC), in northeast Portland. Portland Public Schools (PPS) and Providence have had a strong partnership for over a decade and are extremely pleased with the financially viable solution outlined in the bill.

The PCC is the only pediatric skilled nursing facility in the northwest and has the capacity to serve 58 patients. PPS currently provides education services to many of the students. Most students are transported to their neighborhood school to receive education services while some receive instruction on-site at the center.

Last year, after a close examination of Oregon statute, it became clear that residency for purposes of public education services was determined by where the parent lives, not where the student resides. Over half of the children at the PCC have parents who do not reside within PPS's boundary. The 2013 legislature implemented a one-year fix to ensure continuity of education for these kids with PPS. This session, HB 4009 provides a permanent targeted solution.

The bill clarifies that regardless of where the parents reside, for purposes of children living in an Oregon pediatric skilled nursing facility, the state will be responsible for the cost of their education. The Oregon Department of Education will contract with the district in which the facility is located (Portland Public Schools) to provide education services. PPS will no longer claim ADMw or pull funds from the High Cost Disability Fund to pay for the education of this group of kids; instead, the funding will be drawn directly from the state school fund.

House Bill 4009 is a narrow but important bill that provides access and opportunity to extremely vulnerable students at the Providence Child Center. We urge a yes vote on House Bill 4009.