

From: Mike Wolfe [<mailto:mdwjmw1@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 5:57 AM
To: Graham Courtney
Cc: Mike Wolfe
Subject: Salem-Keizer School District Written Testimony on House Bill 2927 - High Cost Disabilities Account

Hi Courtney - I apologize for sending an email instead of an official memo, but ran out of time this week. Please accept this email as the official position of the Salem-Keizer School District on HB 2927.

The Salem-Keizer School District is in support of House Bill 2927. It is clear from the work of the Task Force on School Funding that costs have continued to rise for this very important group of students, while the funding level has remained static. There is a strong case to be made that the cost of education has risen for all students and it is especially so for this subgroup. The data is clear and the issue is well documented. Increasing the High Cost Disabilities Grant will benefit all school districts that are serving this population of students. To put the need into context, Salem-Keizer submitted over \$12.5 million in High Cost Disability claims in 2012-13.

The discussions at the Task Force on School Funding included establishing a set reimbursement rate of 80%, as opposed to just a higher static dollar amount that would, over time, not keep up with the increasing costs to serve these students. The funding for the increase was recommended to be an additional allocation outside of the State School Fund. In other words, the task force was very sensitive to further diluting the SSF.

The Salem-Keizer School District strongly encourages the legislature to set a fixed reimbursement rate of 80% and direct the Department of Education to establish a statewide High Cost Disabilities Committee to determine the amount of funding required each biennium to maintain the 80% reimbursement rate. The Salem-Keizer School District would offer its support to this ongoing effort, as would many other districts.

Thank you for addressing this very important and urgent matter.

Respectfully,

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