

House Committee on Education  
Paul Terdal, Portland, OR  
**Please Vote YES on House Bill 2673**  
February 20, 2015

Chair Doherty and members of the Committee,

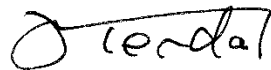
I'm writing as an advocate for children and families with special needs, and as the father of two boys receiving special education services for autism, to ask you to SUPPORT HB2673.

HB2673 will promote communication between schools and parents about the types of services and accommodations that are available for children with special needs. It asks school districts to provide parents with an annual summary of the special education and related services provided to students in the previous year. Most parents who attend IEP meetings to plan these services for their children have little idea of what's possible and may not even know what to ask for. Parents who are able to afford expensive legal representation have much greater access to information about service availability, and can thus get more services than lower income parents who must negotiate alone.

In addition, parents who pursue legal action against schools over inadequate special education services are usually asked to sign a confidentiality agreement as part of any settlement, preventing them from sharing information about the accommodations or services they have received with other parents – resulting in further inequality between those with the means to advocate and those without. HB2673 would prohibit such confidentiality agreements about services, while preserving confidentiality in monetary or compensatory awards.

HB2673 also aligns Oregon law with national standard on timing for an initial evaluation or reevaluation at 60 calendar days, rather than 60 school days. The current 60 school day timing – when weekends, holidays, and summer vacations are taken into consideration – could mean a delay of many months before these critical evaluations are completed, leaving students without access to the services that they need to succeed. Oregon should follow the national standard and complete these evaluations in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terdal". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Paul Terdal