



OREGON  
*Alliance*  
of Children's Programs

## SB 135 – SUPPORT

Senate Education Committee

March 5, 2015

Dear Chair Roblan and Committee Members,

I am Janet Arenz, Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance of Children's Programs. We are a statewide nonprofit organization representing 45 providers, who deliver \$223 million in services to over 100,000 children each year. Additionally, these providers employ 5500 individuals, with \$152 million in annual payroll.

The Alliance represents 64% of the Long-term Care and Treatment (LTCT) providers who treat children in educational settings. Attached is a page with the logos of all of our members who are providers for this system.

We are very pleased with the ODE changes represented in this bill, and appreciate their dedicated work to make these important improvements:

- Moving to a Grant-in-Aide system.
- Providing flexibility in funding to education providers.
- Clarifies that the resident school districts pay for education school districts even though another educational entity is providing the educational services.

They are also making other administrative fixes that will get more funding to education services for children.

**This is an opportunity to get these pieces in place so we can move on to the most important work: delivering the education services and outcomes these children are entitled to.**

### WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT

- 1150 children who are disabled with behavioral and mental health issues because of abuse and neglect
- 43% of them are children of color
- 94% of them are in poverty so significant they need free and reduced lunches
- 99% of them are in treatment services provided by Medicaid because of trauma and poverty

707 13<sup>th</sup> Street SE  
Suite 290  
Salem, Oregon 97301  
Phone: (503) 399-9076  
[www.oregonalliance.org](http://www.oregonalliance.org)

## POVERTY AND OREGON'S EDUCATION

- Oregon is “Worst-in-nation ... and widening gaps... between poor and non-poor students’ reading and math skills (rank: No. 50)”  
[Oregonian, 1-7-2015, a national study conducted by *Education Weekly*]

## TRAUMA

The most articulate description of the trauma that created mental illness, addiction and behavioral issues for these children is the **Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES)**. A graph is attached for you to look at.

- ACES is a study of 10 events which identify traumatic experiences for children. Scores which represent 4 or more of the 10 events create behavioral, health and learning difficulties.
- 68% of these children have a score of 5 or more on the ACE Study.
- These children are headed into a pipeline of social and physical health ills, including becoming chronically ill in adulthood.
- Science identifies the brain “freezing” in development and learning with unaddressed trauma. Children must be ready to receive an education. LTCT treatment programs provide that readiness.

## OREGON'S EDUCATION GOALS

### 40-40-20

- These children must have educational support to catch up on grade levels and finish high school or they will never be eligible for post-secondary education.
- To do this, we must fund the right education services for them through LTCT programs at all grade levels.

### Chronic Absenteeism

- This is the single largest contributor to children not finishing high school.
- These children were among the chronically absent until they were in treatment. An investment in education builds their commitment to stay in school post-treatment.

## NEXT STEPS

SB 135 is an important step and will result in better education services.

The most important steps are next:

- to treat these children equally with other children in mainstream classrooms
- achieve parity in the LTCT system
- fund education for graduation

Thank you



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