



Oregon School Employees Association

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March 6, 2017

Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
State Capitol - 900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 363

Chair Gelser and members of the committee, my name is Amy Wilson, and I'm an instructional assistant in the Roseburg School District. For the past nine years, I've worked in the developmental learning center classroom. I tell people I have the greatest job in the world, and I mean it. But we need help to make our classrooms, our students and our staff safer.

I've been pinched so hard that I bled. In one school year, from my shoulders to my ankles, I had 25 bruises. I've literally moved in front of a child to shield her from another child throwing a chair at her. At one point to protect myself, I purchased shin guards and a long-sleeved jacket to wear during summer months so the bites and kicks don't hurt as much.

This work follows me home. I walk into a classroom every day knowing that, at some point, at least one child is going to have a bad day. When this happens, I replay it in my head over and over again, often causing me to lose sleep. The job is so physically and mentally exhausting that I'll sometimes sleep all weekend.

Many of the students in our classroom are at the same time aggressive and vulnerable. When we get the training and information we need to be able to help a child with their unique needs, they usually meet the goals outlined in their Individualized Education Plan. When we document a child's tendencies - what upsets them, what helps them calm down, whether their behavior is getting better or worse - you know how to engage that child. We can follow the data to achieve success.

But too often, the behavioral assessments and plans to support those students aren't getting done. And that makes the classroom less safe for themselves, their classmates and education employees. As I said earlier, the data that comes from a functional behavioral assessment and a plan to support that data makes all the difference for a child.

It's also important that we are trained to fulfill the unique needs for each child. I know what to do when working with children with autism or Down's syndrome, but I don't have training on emotional disturbances. What I do for the children I'm trained for may be completely wrong for a child with an

emotional disturbance. Parents and administrators need to understand that if you want these children to meet their goals, we have to understand their behaviors.

The challenges so many children face are unfair and profound. When we fail to follow what works, we fail that child, and often their classmates and staff too. We need your help to get on the right track.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amy Wilson
Instructional Assistant
Roseburg School District

