

HB 3263



Occupational Therapy
Association of Oregon

Workload Guidelines for School-Based Occupational Therapy

School-Based Occupational Therapy (OT)

- Students with disabilities face unique educational challenges. With clinical backgrounds in neurology, kinesiology, mental health, and human development; school-based OTs identify these challenges, design plans to address them, remediate them through direct treatments, provide consultation to teachers and staff about them, and modify classroom environments to decrease their negative impact on a student's ability to succeed in an educational program. 6,8,9,12, 14,16
- School-based OTs consider how a student's sensorimotor, cognitive and psychosocial systems affect their educational performance within the school contexts. They meet students where they are at and customize school activities to provide each student with the 'just right challenge'. OTs understand that meaningful activities and authentic learning are key components to educational engagement. They support the foundational skills that students need to produce written language, use classroom tools, be independent in self-care, attend to daily tasks, follow school routines, socialize with fellow students and staff, and physically access the learning environment. 2,3,4,5,11,15
- OT is a federally mandated "related service" for qualifying children, ages 3-21, with individualized education programs (IEP) under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). 1

Workload Challenges

Many school-based OTs in Oregon have unreasonably high case/workloads. In fact, Oregon has some of the highest workloads in the country. In some instances, workloads are up to 150 students, divided over multiple campuses. They are so large that often they interfere with the ability of the OT practitioner to provide quality care to the students who are most in need. Currently, the state lacks legislation around OT workloads. Without standards to regulate efficient service statewide, Oregon's school-based OT practitioners continue to fall short of meeting the national expectations of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and IDEA. 1

HB3263

The Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon (OTAO) is presenting a bill that will create workload guidelines for school-based OT practitioners working in the State of Oregon.

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