

March 31, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been a school-based occupational therapist for 22 years. I address the sensory, motor, psychosocial, cognitive and emotional skills of students to help them be more successful in their educational programs.

There are no state guidelines for school based OT workloads in Oregon which has resulted in extremely large caseloads throughout the state. Many caseloads exceed 100, mine sits at around 80. A caseload of 80 means 80 IEPs, and about 27 three year re-evaluations. In addition, each year OT's do an additional 30-40 new evaluations. As the caseloads have gone up the severity of the student's disabilities seems to also have gone up making the job impossible.

Federal law requires adequate occupational therapy as a 'related service' on the students IEPs. This is not being adhered to due to lack of workload regulations. OT's cannot meet the needs of their students and make meaningful changes to student's skills with caseloads at this level. Most of our time is spent trying to keep up with the mandatory evaluations and IEP paperwork, leaving little time to support students and teachers.

Supporting HB 3263 leads to better management of OT service in schools which will allow OT's to better support students, teachers and schools and will ensure adherence to federal law. Many states have adequate guidelines for OT caseload numbers and with the passage of HB3263 Oregon OT could also have caseloads low enough to make real differences in the lives of the students we serve.

Thank you,

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