

Date: April 1, 2017
To: Legislative Committee members
Re: HB 3263

Dear Committee members,

I am an Occupational Therapist with the Salem-Keizer School District. A school-based OT addresses fine motor, sensorimotor, psychosocial and cognitive skills to help children access their educational programs. Currently there are no state guidelines regarding the number of students on an OT caseload. In our district, OT caseloads regularly exceed 100 students. This has resulted in a high turnover of OT staff and lack of continuity of care for our students. In fact, we have had 6 OTs leave in the last 3 years. We had to hire 4 OTs from contract agencies for this current school year because we were unable to fill the positions with local therapists.

According to IDEA, OTs are related service providers on an IEP. It becomes extremely difficult to fulfill related service obligations with large caseloads. Our OT caseloads have continued to increase with no cap or workload limits. HB 3263 would ensure that OT services will be provided in accordance with federal law.

Other states have adopted workload formulas (North Carolina) or caseload caps (Washington) that have addressed management of school-based OT caseloads. The ultimate goal is to be able to provide the legally required services in order for our students with disabilities to access their educational program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michelle Pavelek, Occupational Therapist Salem-Keizer School District Mpavelek65@icloud.com

Sent from my iPad