



## Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon

**The Occupational Therapy Association of Oregon supports HB 3263, that would promote the State Board of Education's adoption by rule of standards for provision of occupational therapy to students who have individualized education plans.**

Currently, occupational therapists (OTs) in the state of Oregon carry some of the highest caseloads in the country; some OTs have reported caseloads of up to 150 students. Caseloads of this size are unmanageable, and interfere with their ability to provide adequate services to Oregon's students. Furthermore, they create ethical dilemmas for therapist who feel they are out of compliance with the scope of school-based OT as mandated by federal law (Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The American Occupational Therapy Association recommends that each therapist handle 16-43 students, depending on the type, frequency and duration of service, plus travel expectations.

Additionally, in the current environment Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants are sometimes encouraged to perform "consultation" services. In these cases, the service that assistants should provide are instead carried out by individuals who are not trained or licensed. This is out of compliance with regulations set by The Oregon Health Authority Division of Medical Assistance Programs.

### **Evidence from other states:**

- Wisconsin OT caseloads have a cap of 30 students for one occupational therapist, or 45 students if supervising an OT assistant. A 1.0 FTE occupational therapist may supervise no more than 2.0 FTE assistants and no more than 3 assistants in total.
- Occupational therapists in Ohio are allowed to provide services to no more than 50 school-age students or 40 preschool students.
- Washington caseloads are limited to 30-40 students, with no more than 30 preschool or 40 school-age children.
- North Carolina has created a workload formula that examines the distribution of time occupational therapists spend working directly with and in support of students. For example: one full-time therapist might provide 25 hours of individual, small group, and/or consultation services per week to a caseload of 45 children, at a single site (i.e., no driving time). The remaining time in the week is designated for meetings, documentation, and assessments. Another full-time therapist who must drive to multiple school sites each week might provide 15 hours of individual, small group, or consultation services each week to a caseload of 50 children. Similarly, the remaining time in the week would be spent in meetings, documentation, and assessments.

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