



May 22, 2017

TO: Representative Margaret Doherty, Chair
House Committee on Education
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: SB 263A

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 263A, children with special needs and their families.

Disability Rights Oregon is Oregon's federally funded Protection and Advocacy agency that protects the legal rights of Oregonians with disabilities. SB 263 will set clear legal standards to protect children who now experience educational neglect because they are not allowed to attend full days of school, sometimes for years at a time.

SB 263A says that a student may be put on an abbreviated school day program only if:

- The program is determined through the IEP process,
- The program is based upon the student's needs,
- Parents are consulted and engaged before the program is approved,
- Less exclusionary alternative are explored and deemed inappropriate, and
- Parents are kept informed and engaged on an ongoing basis.

The -4 amendments, which DRO support, clarify some terminology in the bill:

- "Abbreviated school day program" is where a school district restricts access to hours of instruction for more than 10 days per school year,
- "Parent" included adult students,
- "Unilaterally place" means placement without parental consent, and
- Voluntary home schooling is specifically exempted.

DRO wants to particularly thank Senators Gelser and Knopp for their work and support, as well as COSA, OSBA, ODE and FACT who have helped to create a step forward for students with disabilities who have behavioral needs.

We all recognize that when behaviors are addressed by lengthy exclusion from school rather than effective services, children with disabilities are more likely to have early academic problems and difficulty staying enrolled and graduating. Having clear standards for educators and informed and engaged parents will help Oregon to achieve better outcomes for students whose disabilities – such as autism and ADHD/ADD – can cause behavioral problems that do not respond to regular disciplinary practices.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 263A.