



February 22, 2017

TO: Senator Sara Gelser, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
FR: Bob Joondeph, Executive Director
RE: SB 262

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 262 and the needs of students with disabilities.

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is Oregon's federally-funded Protection and Advocacy office that provides legal-based advocacy services to Oregonians with disabilities. DRO supports passage of SB 262.

Many of us, when tasked with a project, "work against deadline." In some cases, this can mean that the work does not get done until it has to.

This can also be true for the work of evaluating and reevaluating students for special education services by a school district. Although some students may require extensive evaluations that require more than two months to complete, this is far from the average case. Nonetheless, the present timeline requirements allow schools to spend more than a third of a school year to complete all evaluations and reevaluations.

Another hidden effect of this long timeline is to disempower parents who have no option other than wait in situations that are unreasonably delayed. For a parent who recognizes that special education services are critically necessary for their child to make educational progress, unreasonable delays can be excruciating.

SB 262 permits longer periods for evaluation and reevaluation a student when circumstances beyond the districts control require delay or the district obtains written parental consent. This bill empowers parents by creating incentives for school districts to engage parents in order to explain why a longer period of evaluation is in the best interest of their child.

SB 262 also recognizes other circumstances when the 60 day time frame would not apply, specifically excluding periods of instructional breaks and need for medial or vision examinations.

School districts should be encouraged to work for the best interest of all their students, engaging and empowering parents and not unnecessarily delaying critical evaluations. SB 262 will do this. Thank you for considering it.