



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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**Colt Gill**  
Director

**SB 13: Deaf and Hard of Hearing terminology update**  
**Senate Committee on Education**  
**January 30, 2019**

Good afternoon Chair Wagner, members of the committee. For the record, I am Jessica Ventura with the Department of Education. With me is Dr. Sharla Jones, the director of the School for the Deaf. We are here to ask your support for SB 13 and the -1 amendments, which updates some terms in the special education law.

Some of the terminology in the statutes has become outdated. Members of the deaf and hard or hearing community wrote to ODE requesting that the term “hearing impairment” be changed to “deaf or hard of hearing.” The term “deaf and hard of hearing” is viewed as an all-inclusive term representing individuals with a wide range of hearing loss and cultural affiliations.

The Department of Education surveyed students with a hearing loss, parents of children with a hearing loss, school district staff, regional program staff, early intervention/early childhood special education staff, department staff, the State Interagency Coordinating Council, the State Advisory Council for Special Education, and FACT Oregon members to gain input regarding changing “hearing impairment” to “deaf or hard of hearing.” Of those responding to the survey, 97% agreed that Oregon’s term should change from “hearing impairment” to “deaf and hard of hearing.”

SB 13 changes the term “hearing impairment” to “deaf or hard of hearing.”

While reviewing these statutes, department staff encountered a few other outdated terms, so we are proposing updating those as well. The -1 amendments:

- Changes “autism” to “autism spectrum disorder”
- Changes “blindness or deafness or both” to deafblind.
- Separates out “other health impairment” for clarity.

Thank you for your consideration. We are happy to take questions.