



Oregon School Employees Association

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House Committee on Education
Rep. Margaret Doherty, Chair
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Doherty and members of the committee:

The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents more than 22,000 workers in nearly all levels of public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, ESDs and community colleges. OSEA members perform many of the thankless tasks that keep Oregon public schools safe and functional for students, administrators and teachers throughout the school day.

This session we've brought forward House Bill (HB) 2676 as the next step in our Work Shouldn't Hurt campaign. Since 2015, OSEA has spearheaded Work Shouldn't Hurt, a campaign to ensure that school staff remain safe while providing a quality learning environment for students with profound intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 2017, we helped pass HB 3318, which gives special education assistants more information by requiring functional behavior assessments on students with an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Plan and allowing service providers to have input into the development, review or revision of the Behavioral Intervention Plan and requiring they are notified of changes and training opportunities. OSEA has also successfully petitioned Oregon OSHA to change a rule that had exempted K-12 school districts from the stringent recordkeeping regulations that other occupations are required to follow.

HB 2676 brings further attention to this issue and support to the special education staff on the front lines by increasing the cap on students for whom districts can claim additional weight in the State School Fund distribution formula. Currently, districts can claim additional weight for special education students up to 11 percent of the district's total students – though this may significantly shortchange the district and the students they are attempting to serve. And it does shortchange districts – 159 of Oregon's 197 school districts – that currently have more than 11 percent of students needing special education services. Raising the cap to 13 percent would better reflect the statewide average and would represent about \$62 million in additional resources to districts.

Oregon still has a ways to go to ensure a high quality educational environment for students that also keeps staff safe in their work. But it's unlikely that we will get there if we maintain the artificial, and now more than 20-year-old, cap on special education funding that we have today. Updating the distribution formula to better reflect the reality of Oregon's school districts is a critical step

toward our goal that Work Shouldn't Hurt. We **strongly urge this committee to pass House Bill 2676.**

Thank you for your attention,

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