

April 10, 2019

TO: Representative Margaret Doherty, Chair  
House Committee on Education  
FR: Bob Joondeph and Chris Shank  
RE: Support for SB 963

Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) is the Protection and Advocacy program for Oregon, advocating for the rights, safety and dignity of Oregonians with disabilities. DRO supports passage of SB 963 as an important step to protect the safety and education of students with disabilities.

SB 963 provides greater clarity for educators and administrators who are faced with a decision of whether it is necessary to physically restrain a student in order to ensure safety for staff and students. DRO worked closely with the Oregon Education Association (OEA) to craft language for SB 963 that gives greater guidance to educators and administrators while maintaining strong protection for students from the use of excessive physical interventions.

One way that SB 963 accomplishes this balance is by setting out numerous types of physical restraints that are specifically prohibited because they create a high risk of harm to youth and do not conform with best practices. Another is to plainly state that restraint or seclusion may be used on a student only if the student's behavior imposes an objectively reasonable risk of imminent and substantial physical or bodily injury to the student or others and less restrictive interventions would not be effective.

DRO's goal for this legislation is to ensure that Oregon schools are safe environments for all students, educators and staff. When students feel safe, they can engage in learning. In pursuit of that same goal, DRO continues to support initiatives that provide districts and educators with tools to understand the source of student behavioral issues. Schools must have this understanding in order to provide students with effective supports and teach skills needed to safely and successfully attend school.

We would like to thank Senator Gelser and OEA for their work to produce this thoughtful and practical bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for SB 963.