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Kate Brown, Governor



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Colt Gill
Director

SB 13: Deaf or Hard of Hearing terminology update
House Committee on Education
April 29, 2019

Good afternoon Chair Doherty, members of the committee. For the record, I am Jennifer Donovan with the Department of Education. With me is Boaz Edmunson, Dean of Student Life, Oregon School for the Deaf. We are here to ask your support for SB 13-A, 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Some of the terminology in the statutes has become outdated.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 or 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 or 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While reviewing these statutes, department staff encountered a few other outdated terms, so those terms were updated as well. SB 13:

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

We also ask your support of the –A4 amendments. Upon additional research, our staff is asking that “emotional behavior disorder” be changed to “emotional behavior disability” to further remove any stigma associated with the prior terms of “disturbance” and “disorder.” The bill

also corrects an error in wording done in the 2018 session and changes the definition of “developmental delay” to a reference to *age* rather than *grade*.

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