



**Gregory Gaden, Ed.D,**  
**Executive Director of Special Education**

...ss, Achievement, Together...for All Students

March 26, 2021

Members of the Oregon Senate  
900 Court St. NE, S-303 Salem  
OR 97301

Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon State Senate,

This letter of support for SB5513 is presented to you on behalf of the Regional Inclusive Services Advisory Committee (RISAC) located in Willamette Educational Service District (WESD). Our members represent Region V of the Oregon Department of Education's Regional Programs found in SB5513. Our committee and the staff of WESD Regional Programs work with our area schools, as well as with families and area special education providers, to provide effective and appropriate services for students with disabilities from birth to age twenty-one.

As you can see from the enclosed legislative talking points document, an additional \$10 million is needed to fund state-wide Regional Programs in the 2021-23 budget biennium. These critically important Regional Programs provide children/students/families with support in the areas of traumatic brain injury, deaf and hard of hearing, autism, blind, visually impaired and orthopedically impaired. The intensive and important work our educators do on behalf of our students and families is critically needed to assist them in reaching the required levels of performance expected of our students/families in order for our students to obtain an independent life in areas such as vocational, technical, recreational, academic and independent living in our communities. Without this increase in funding, services will undoubtedly be decreased for students that need it the most and are required by law.

It is also important to point out that in 2020-21 Regional Programs in the state "did not" receive Elementary Secondary Schools Emergency Recovery (ESSER) Act funds. While stimulus and support funds were provided to other areas of special education services, no direct ESSER fund made it to Regional Programs in 20-21, yet the needs of our most vulnerable children rose exponentially during the pandemic.

Funding increases to the WESD Regional Programs would allow us to dedicate resources to purchase additional assistive technology for children/students, acquire staff equipment for effective instructional presentations, provide professional development to both general and special education staff based on the needs of students, acquire researched based learning management systems, and stop the regressive trend of level funding on Regional Programs in Oregon.

Please join our committee in support of SB5513 in order for us to achieve our goals and provide a free and appropriate education for students with verified disabilities in the Oregon.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Greg Gaden at 503-588-5330 or email him at [greg.gaden@wesd.org](mailto:greg.gaden@wesd.org).

Sincerely,

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**Dave Novotney, Ph.D.**  
**Superintendent**

**Regional Inclusive Services Advisory Committee Roster  
(RISAC)**

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