

Esteemed members of the task force,

Oregon's special education systems have been in crisis for many years. The passage of SB 819 — a law that simply adds an enforcement mechanism to the 50-year-old failure to provide ALL students with a free and appropriate public education — is proof of that. Oregon needs to *specifically* and *generously* offer compensation to special education teachers to ensure the law is followed and the 1 in six Oregon children with a disability get the education they deserve.

They say a rising tide raises all boats, but universally designed instruction truly makes learning accessible to all children. Having more special education teachers in the building will also help all students by teaching their peers how to differentiate their instructions for different learners.

Bolstering the special education team will also make for a more welcoming environment for the many children who have been effectively denied their civil right to a public education. I believe my children are among them. During the pandemic — while their teachers and paraeducators and specialists were still being paid — my children received a scant *45-minutes per week* of online group instruction. When in-person instruction resumed, the school was unwilling to offer accommodations that would maintain the progress they had made at home. The school blamed “staffing” for their inability to meet their needs.

My children deserve the right to an education in their neighborhood school, just like any other child. I have effectively been their paraeducator, teacher, nurse and specialist for four years so I know it's possible with a trained and stable staff.

Our family has been lucky enough to be able to make the sacrifices needed to teach them at home through an online public charter. They are bright and capable students who are now on a trajectory to a regular high school diploma and, eventually, to join the workforce. We must do more to ensure that *all* of Oregon's disabled kids have access to an educational environment and instructors that can help them be the best they can be, too.

Thank you for your work on these issues that will have long-lasting impacts on generations of Oregonians to come,

Shasta Kearns Moore