



**Mission:** Empower Oregon families experiencing disability in their pursuit of a whole life by expanding awareness, growing community, and equipping families.

February 7, 2023

Chair Dembrow  
Vice-Chair Weber  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

**RE: Support of SB 819 – Abbreviated School Days**

FACT Oregon is a family-led nonprofit that works toward a future where communities are accessible, inclusive, and empower the self-determination of people with disabilities. We support families, youth with disabilities, and partners to hold high expectations, navigate special education and disability systems and advocate for the supports needed to thrive at home, in school, and in community. **Since 2012, we have served as the state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center [PTI] for special education.**

FACT Oregon began tracking support requests related to abbreviated days around 2015, when we noticed an increase of requests for support about it. In July 2021, all parties of a federal lawsuit filed in Oregon around abbreviated school days requested that FACT Oregon, as the PTI, provide a report on data collected. The report shared that, from 2016-2021, 467 unique families called us about shortened school days.

The pandemic made collecting this data difficult for a variety of reasons and since spring 2021, when schools returned to in person instruction, we have received calls from 178 unique families from over 50 districts from across the state on reduced school days. These families call because they do not agree with their child's school day being reduced; they do not believe they were able to participate in the decision-making process and/or they feel that decisions made are influenced by a lack of training or availability of school personnel to provide support.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] ensures that students with disabilities have available a Free Appropriate Public Education [FAPE] that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the student's UNIQUE NEEDS and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. AND it calls out parents as members of the IEP team and are entitled to participate in the process. Yet, despite this, we still find that students with disabilities are more likely to have school days cut short than their nondisabled peers.

**FACT Oregon supports SB 819** as a protective measure to ensure that families can meaningfully participate in educational decisions afforded to them by IDEA. We strongly believe we need to shift the focus of shortened day away from children with disabilities onto districts to ensure that staff are provided adequate training and information to support students, and to manage limited resources to ensure that the most vulnerable students receive an equitable education.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Christy Reese, Executive Director

FACT Oregon