

Feb. 14, 2023

Senate Committee on Education  
Chair Dembrow

RE: SB 283-3

Misty Talerico  
Bay City  
Tillamook School District 9

RE: Testimony in support of SB 283-3 amendments

On Behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association, I would like to thank you for your leadership and strong steps that set Oregon on a course correction in this bill that will make the work and home lives of classified employees better with the following dash one amendments:

All classified employees need just cause. Just cause is very common employment law. This law allows rights for the employee, knowing that termination of their job will only happen for misconduct, documented performance issues, or bona fide economic issues. I, along with my fellow coworkers, long for job security. In my district, my contract states only “discipline/dismissal” and not just cause.

Thank you for adding a special education differential that includes those classified employees who support in special ed for a majority of their workday. **We believe that the “majority of their work” should be defined as 51% of the workday or pay period, whichever is larger.** I worked as a special education special care educational assistant for eight years. During that time I was verbally assaulted and physically injured. One of the reasons I left my position for an office job was due to a permanent injury I suffered assisting a student during escalation. I live with chronic pain. Last year I decided to change positions to become the assistant of a virtual academy. My desk is in the main office of my districts alternative school. I am still supporting students who are on IEPs. I will have an escalated student who cannot be in class spend hours with me in the school office while they regulate. As a building representative, I hear upsetting stories from bus drivers about not knowing that students on their route have an IEP and behavior plan. They were not informed until after a bus incident took place where the bus driver was brought in for a disciplinary issue because they were not aware of the student’s behavior plan and did not follow it. I have witnessed custodians spend hours cleaning up and repairing damage that students on IEPs create. My own autistic son will spend hours with his school secretaries when his class or lunchroom is too loud. Many classified employees who are not identified as a special education assistant support students on an IEP daily and need to also be considered in this.

I support the state defining a minimum workday of five (5) hours for classified workers with the option for a classified employee to provide a written request to have a shorter workday. This extra allowance acknowledges that many of our members give care to their kids,

grandkids and/or parents at home while supporting all their K-12 students at work. Splitting a full-time job into two part time jobs to save money on employee benefits happens frequently in my district. When this happens, it is difficult to find qualified employees to fill the underpaid, no benefit positions. That leaves my fellow coworkers and myself to pick up the slack for these unfilled vacancies. In my district we will have bus drivers double up on bus routes. Kitchen staff work twice as hard because they still need to serve breakfast and lunch on time to students. Staff must take out their own garbage and clean their room because they cannot find part-time custodians. This will open the qualified candidate pool and allow positions to finally be filled.

Sincerely,

Misty Talerico  
OSEA Government Affairs Committee Chair