



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

February 27, 2023

Chair Courtney Neron

Vice-Chair Zach Hudson

Vice-Chair Boomer Wright

Members of the House Education Committee

RE: [HB 2710 – Increasing Transparency in Oregon School Spending](#)

Dear Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Hudson, Vice-Chair Wright, and members of the House Education Committee,

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.**

In its role as the PTI, FACT Oregon spends a great deal of time supporting families navigating the special education system and it is common for families to share that budget and/or staffing issues have influenced decisions about an appropriate individualized education program [IEP] for their child. While families know that school districts receive additional funds for their students receiving special education services, many do not understand the process, mechanisms or how to “see” where funds are being allocated. While we understand that the expenditures aren’t broken down by student, it’s still important for families to know how the State School Fund, our state’s primary investment in public education, is being used to support students with disabilities. Building a process for transparency will help all involved identify and collaborate on needs while building a sense of trust in the process.

As an executive director of a statewide nonprofit, and a former banker, I hold accountability and transparency in high regard. Even in a nonprofit that some may consider small, our budgets can be complicated because of multiple funding streams with grants, contracts, sponsorships, and donations. These all need to be tracked, accounted for, and then shared with our board of directors, who may not have a finance background. I often explain to our board that our budget is made up of a “micro” budgets for the different funding categories we have, and these “roll up” to a “macro” budget. This process ensures that we are accountable to the purpose of funding, ensures that there is no “double dipping” or using different funds for the same thing, and provides a level of transparency to our board, staff, funders and stakeholders.

School districts currently track their budgets, perform annual audits and we believe that submitting this to the state education agency should not create a burden of additional time or effort. We believe that adding this level of transparency will allow the state to know and understand how our investment in education is working to achieve the state’s goals.

FACT Oregon supports HB 2710 as an essential step in ensuring that **students with and without disabilities** receive an equitable education.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Christy Reese, Executive Director

FACT Oregon