

Richard and Mary Larson
5955 Skyline Dr.
West Linn, Or. 97068

March 16, 2023

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber and members of the Senate Committee on Education;

My name is Richard Larson and I am a member of the Board of Directors of *Serendipity Center*. I'm writing to ask you to support a bill that will come up for a hearing in the Senate Education Committee on March 21st. Senate Bill 633 sets aside critical funding for Oregon's highest needs students. The bill would establish a special education multi-district collaborative model which promotes the establishment of a network of special education centers in Oregon dedicated to healing our youth who struggle with the most acute mental health and disability challenges.

I am volunteering my time in retirement, after 32 years in public school administration, serving on the Board of Serendipity Center, because I know and understand the dire need for programs such as this to serve children with acute mental health disabilities. During my career I witnessed how our educators struggled when one student caused a room clear or dominated the time of the school principal and counselor, leaving other students needs unmet. These issues cannot be addressed in a regular school and students are best served by the highly trained staff in a school specially designed for this purpose.

As a strong believer in Serendipity Center's mission and model to provide evidence-based, trauma-informed services to public school students, I support Senate Bill 633. This bill would advance the field of special education and children's mental health throughout the State of Oregon so that more students will receive an equitable education experience and thrive.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard and Mary Larson