

Submitter: Erika Schwartz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB633

I am a board member at Serendipity Center and a Speech-Language Pathologist who works in public schools. I am 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 serving our youth who struggle with the most acute mental health and disability challenges.

As a special educator, I know that Oregon's public schools do a good job of serving children with disabilities; however there are some children whose mental health and behavior needs can't be addressed in a typical school and they deserve an education too. Serendipity Center provides evidence-based, trauma-informed care to kids with this level of need in the Portland metro area and maintains a waiting list every year. There is a real need for similar centers in other parts of the state.

I support Senate Bill 633. This bill will advance the field of special education and children's mental health in Oregon so that more students will receive an equitable education experience and thrive.