

Submitter: Carol Moore
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB633

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

My name is Carol Moore and I write to you in regards to SB 633 and offer suggestions for amendments, particularly to stress inclusive practices.

As a retired school psychologist and education administrator, I served children with disabilities in a variety of capacities, including as a special education director in both small rural districts and large education service districts. Throughout my career I worked to advance inclusion to the fullest extent possible. I am also the parent of an adult child with severe disabilities who required intensive educational settings and services. I have seen first hand the complexities the current system faces when presented with a student with extremely disruptive behavior.

The difficult truth is that not every child benefits from a regular setting for their education – even with appropriate modifications and accommodations. This is why the Individuals with Disabilities Act requires all students to be educated in the least restrictive setting possible (defined as one in which that student is educated alongside their peers and is able to access the curriculum and extracurricular activities as well) but also requires that a continuum of educational placements are available to serve those students who require higher levels of service.

Unfortunately, Oregon has few intensive mental health treatments. What is available is expensive and, for many rural districts, physically distant. The need to create a specialized educational setting for a student whose disability manifests with severe disruptive behavior places significant financial and logistical burdens on a district.

Educational Service Districts are strongly positioned to either directly offer or collaborate with other mental health experts to provide services to such students throughout their service area. In fact, that is their stated purpose for creation. This bill would encourage such collaboration and seek to extend it throughout the state.

Several aspects of this bill as written are particularly important. In particular, Sec (1)2.6 and (1)2.7 require robust wrap around services with a focus on equity and outcome measures.

To improve this measure, I recommend that the committee amend to include language that requires districts to first attempt to educate the student in less restrictive settings, with appropriate supports, before considering such highly

restrictive out of district placements. Secondly, language must require a transition plan to less restrictive settings be developed at the outset. Finally, include access to any non-curricular or other opportunities the student may benefit from within the home school district and community at large whenever possible. The goal must always be full integration into society. These important provisions are all explicitly outlined by IDEA, but should be underlined in this measure as well.

Thank you for taking the complex needs of such students, and those who serve them, under consideration in this bill.

Sincerely,
Carol Moore