



March 20, 2023

To: Sen. Dembrow, Chair, Senate Education Committee

From: Leslie Sutton, Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition

RE: SB 633 Opposition to Regional Centers for Special Education and Related Services

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Developmental Disabilities Coalition (DD Coalition) is a group of approximately 40 organizations across Oregon that promote quality services, equity and community integration for Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. Our members include a statewide coalition of people with DD, peer-based family support organizations, support services brokerages, advocacy organizations and DD service providers.

All students deserve to attend school alongside their peers, yet SB 633 creates separate educational programs that would segregate students with disabilities from their peers who do not have disabilities. Decades of experience supporting and listening to people with DD tells us that our communities and schools are strongest when everyone is included. However, SB 633 attempts to separate students with disabilities from other students, which goes against the core tenant of education law that students with disabilities should get an education in the most integrated, least restrictive environment.

We have appreciated the opportunity to have conversations with the proponents of the bill. We agree that students with disabilities deserve support to succeed. We have a different approach to how this should happen. We want to address issues currently in schools like kids not being allowed to attend full school days and continuing to strengthen restraint and seclusion prohibitions. SB 633 goes against the values of community integration of the DD system, and we cannot support it.

We understand the language of the bill relies heavily on the experience of a single program, but the language in SB 633 is very broad and not specific to one program. We have the following concerns with SB 633:

- Oregon has worked for years to ensure that our laws protect students from restraint and seclusion in schools. There is no assurance that programs defined in SB 633 would be subject to Oregon's restraint and seclusion prohibitions.



- When you expect people to succeed, they do. Yet, SB 633 does not outline any requirements for these programs to demonstrate students have robust support to obtain the most rigorous diploma as selected by the student and their IEP team.
- Students with disabilities deserve to be educated in their neighborhood schools. SB 633 creates a parallel education system that only students with disabilities attend. This is the very core of segregation and SB 633 uses public dollars to fund the segregation. We would like to see a discussion about how to support all neighborhood schools serve the students in their area to succeed.

We agree that students with disabilities need better educational opportunities, but we cannot support building opportunities in restrictive, segregated programs.