



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chair Sen. Dembrow and Vice Chair Sen. Weber,

My name is Zach Hudson, and I represent Oregon's 49th House district. Outside of the legislature I'm a special education teacher and case manager, and my wife is a school Speech-Language Pathologist, which also involves case management.

The size of a caseload is one of the most important aspects of total workload for school employees such as special ed teachers, SLPs, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists; however, there are no clear guidelines as to how to judge a manageable caseload size for any employee. As a result, there is significant variation between districts, but the districts themselves have nothing to base their decision on besides what employees seem to accept. This isn't always a good measure.

Anecdotally, I know that employees will leave one school district for another for a caseload size that they feel is more fair, but this is probably never made clear to the district, and gets lost in the shuffle of all the other reasons an employee might change districts. Furthermore, there is a lot of guesswork in assigning caseload size between staff in different specialties. Most people would agree that a Resource Room teacher can handle a larger caseload than a Self-Contained Behavior classroom teacher, and that a Speech Language Pathologist might be able to handle even more, but how does that translate to actual numbers?

What would be useful for both staff and administrators would be some well-founded guidelines that translate number of students on a caseload into a percentage of FTE depending on specialty. This would give an SLP who says that having 100 students on a caseload is unreasonable something measurable to cite instead of having to say that it just "feels like too much."

The study provided for in HB 2618 will go a long way toward improving administrative transparency, employee retention and educational best practices.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zach Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.