



The Arc Oregon

Oregon Special Needs Trust (**OSNT**)
Oregon Training and Consultation (**OTAC**)
Guardianship, Advocacy and Planning Services (**GAPS**)

May 8, 2023

To: Chair Neron

From: Em Braman, Executive Director, The Arc Oregon

RE: Support for SB819 with -13 Amendments

Chair Neron and Committee Members,

On behalf of The Arc Oregon and our local chapters of The Arc throughout Oregon, I am writing today to express our **support for SB819 with -13 amendments.**

The Arc Oregon is an affiliated chapter of The Arc, the nation's oldest and largest organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). For 65 years, The Arc Oregon has advocated with and for people who experience I/DD and their families. Our vision is a world in which every person has the opportunity and support they need to participate fully in their community.

SB 819 addresses the practice of schools putting students on shortened school days. This bill would put into place structures and safeguards to ensure that students with disabilities are provided with meaningful access to the same number of hours of instruction or educational services as their peers. Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the protections it provides students with disabilities a student with a disability who has an IEP it to have access to FAPE, Free and Appropriate Public Education this is guaranteed through law. Education and access to education is a right and it sets the trajectory for a person's life.

Achieve with us.

SB819 makes it so students with disabilities and their families no longer bear the burden attributed to lack of trained staff or resources. At The Arc Oregon we have heard from parents the reason they were informed that their child required an abbreviated school day was necessary due to lack of staffing. This can be a lack of nursing staff for a student with complex medical needs or this could be lack of an instructional assistant to provide 1:1 support. Per the IDEA a student's right to access education does not change due to a district's inability to find staff.

We, at The Arc Oregon, support the requirements within this bill that provide specific timelines for specific actions when a student is on an abbreviated school day. The ability for a parent to revoke their consent to an abbreviated school day at any time provides parents with the confidence that they can approach the school and the individual education plan (IEP) team and not be met with reasons it is not yet time for their child to reenter full school days. One parent shared with us that when she approached the school about getting her child back at school, she was told that her child had yet to meet the criteria showing readiness to attend school. The parent had been unaware that there were "readiness requirements" that her child was to meet. The requirement for the IEP team to meet more frequently when a student is on an abbreviated day keeps all parties accountable to moving forwards towards full day school for the student.

For these reasons and all the other reasons shared by parents and advocates in the hearing I urge this committee to pass SB819 with -13 amendments and get students back into the classroom here in Oregon.