



To: House Committee on Education  
From: Oregon Education Association  
Re: Support for HB 2953 (2025)

Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 42,000 educators across Oregon, and across the education spectrum (from pre-K through community colleges); and we support HB 2953.

For decades, Oregon has strived to create a public school system where every student thrives. An inclusive school system means that students experiencing disability are provided with access to a full range of special education (SpEd) services and are included in general education classrooms as often as possible with schools and educators who can meet their needs.

Over time, Oregon has broadened our definition of which students need support, and the kinds of support individual students need. For example, our understanding of diagnosis for students on the neurodiversity spectrum – such as autism and dyslexia – has changed drastically since that time, resulting in a greater number of students receiving an accurate diagnosis to qualify for specialized services. This means it's time to revisit the way we fund special education from birth through 12th grade.

The special education weight cap of 11% was created about 35 years ago, when the state-wide average of SpEd students within a district's student body was about 11%. Since then, as we have grown to better understand student needs, the state average is now 14.8%. Some districts approach 18% or higher. But just moving the cap without an investment to pay for the additional weights does not account for the costs to serve our students with disabilities. That is why all the new weights created by raising the cap need to be funded as well.

This includes the need to fund any waiver weights as well. For years, the waiver has attempted to support districts over the cap; but in reality – because the waived weights were never funded – it has pushed resources around, causing resource issues in new places while trying to stem issues in others.



By completely lifting the weight cap, and funding the new weights, the legislature can rectify one of the biggest inequities in school funding. For that reason, OEA urges the passage of HB 2953.