

Submitter: Andrew Smith

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

I am writing in support of passing HB 2953 to remove the 11% percentage cap for special education state funding. I have been a special education teacher in the Parkrose and Gresham Barlow School districts for the last 22 years and have seen the devastating effects of not fully funding special education services in these districts. Special education is chronically understaffed and students do not get the level of intensive services needed to truly make progress academically, socio-emotionally, or behaviorally. Increased behavioral support is especially needed as the frequency and intensity of behaviors exhibited by special education students continue to rise. These behaviors have a ripple effect across classrooms and whole school buildings disrupting learning, effecting staff morale, and causing further teacher burnout and negatively impacting teacher retention. Districts across the state are not able to fund the needed specialized programs, especially for students with low incidence, high impact disabilities that have much higher costs. Please vote to pass this bill so that we can correct the devastating lack of appropriate funding and staffing that special education students deserve to have a free appropriate public education.

Thank you,
Andrew Smith
Gresham Barlow Special Educator