

Regional Programs

Serving Oregon's Children and Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities

Regional Programs provide equitable access, specialized supports and educational opportunities for students with low incidence disabilities, *birth to age 21*, so they can achieve success.

Current State General Funding (GF) '17-'19	\$ 27.68 million
Proposed GF for '19-'21 (20% reduction)	\$ 21.48 million
State Fund Needed to Restore '07 Service Levels	\$ 43.5 million
State Funding Shortfall	\$ 22 million

Regional Low Incidence Disabilities:

- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Blind/Visually Impaired
- Deaf/Blind
- Autism
- Orthopedically Impaired
- Traumatic Brain Injury

Student Growth in Regionals:

- 10,562 eligible students, birth to age 21, projected for year #1 of the 2019-2021 biennium
- 34% increase in total student count in 12 years (since 2007)
- 31% increase in students eligible for Autism from 2007-2017
- 27% increase in students eligible for Deaf/Hard of Hearing from 2007-2017

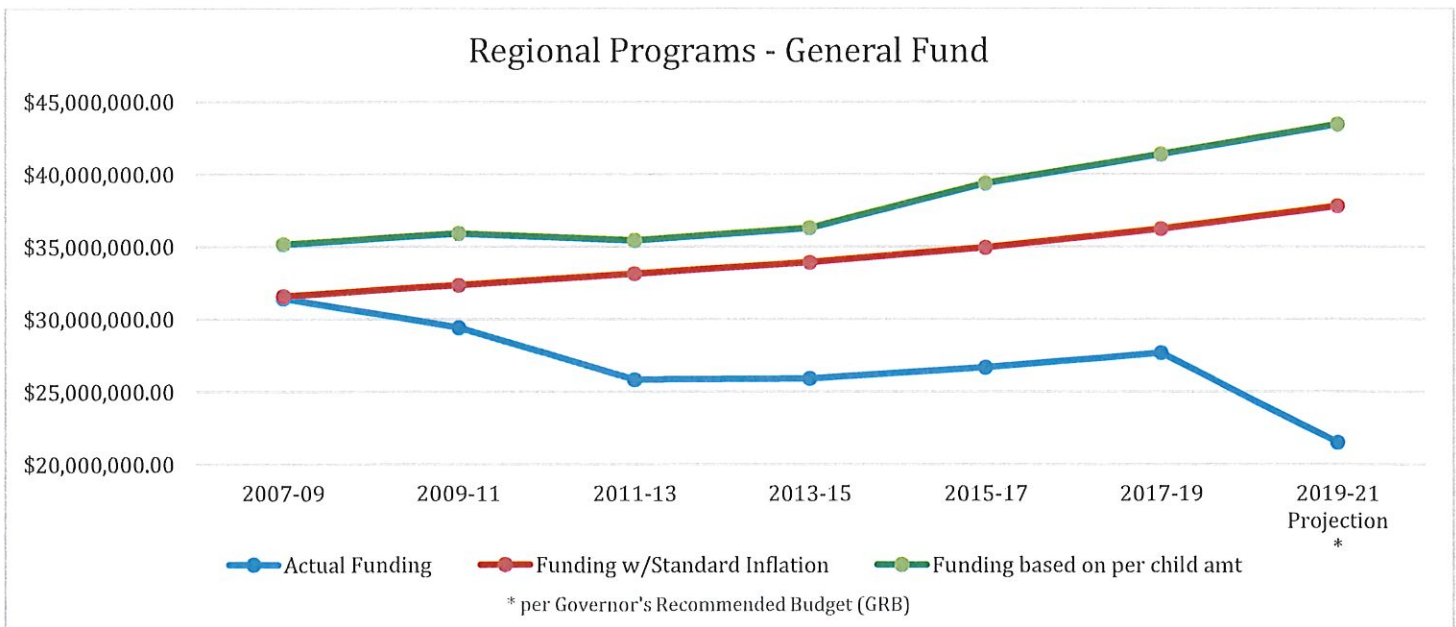
Funding Shortfall:

- 31.8% decrease in State Gen. Funding in 12 yrs (from \$31.5 mill/2007 to projected \$ 21.48 mill/2019)
- 53.4% decrease per/student State Gen. funding in 12 yrs (from \$1995/student/yr in '07 to \$1017/student/yr in '19)
- Federal IDEA Funds (FF) insufficient to meet the needs: FF projection for '19'-21: \$33.9 mill (\$1607/student/yr)
Projected GF+FF=\$2672/student/yr - GF + FF Funding needed: \$3670/student/yr

Adverse Effects:

- Less direct service provided to students
- Potential negative impact on educational and functional outcomes for students
- Potential decrease in attendance and in graduation rates

Increased and stable funding for Regional Programs is essential so students with low incidence disabilities from age birth to 21 have equitable access to achieve educational success.



Estimated Impact of \$6.2M Reduction to Regional Programs

What are Regional Programs?

Regional programs serve over 10,348 (Data source: 2017 December Child Count) students a year in Oregon who experience one or more of these low incidence disabilities:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Blind/Visually Impaired (including Orientation and Mobility Specialists)
- Deafblind
- Severe Orthopedic Impairments
- Traumatic Brain Injury

There are eight regional programs in Oregon:

- Eastern Oregon (Intermountain ESD) serving Malheur, Grant, Union, Wallowa, Umatilla, Baker and Morrow Counties
- Central Oregon (High Desert ESD) and Central Oregon Regional Program (CORP) serving Deschutes, Crook, Jefferson, Harney, Gilliam, Wheeler and Sherman Counties
- Southern Oregon (Southern Oregon ESD) serving Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Douglas and Lake Counties
- Cascade (Linn/Benton/Lincoln ESD and South Coast ESD) serving Linn, Benton, Lincoln, western Douglas, Coos, and Curry Counties
- Willamette (Willamette ESD) serving Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties
- Columbia (Portland Public Schools) serving Multnomah, Clackamas, Hood River, and Wasco Counties
- Lane (Lane ESD) serving Lane County
- Northwest (Northwest Regional ESD) serving Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook, and Washington Counties

Impacts of a \$6.2M Reduction to Regional Programs

The GRB proposes a \$6.2M reduction to Regional Programs. This reduction would amount to an almost 20% funding reduction to each regional program. This kind of reduction will look different for each program—depending on size, number of students served, and location. What follows are some of the projected impacts that Regional Programs have reported.

Impact to Regional Staff:

Regional Programs are responsible to serve all children identified for services. A reduction in funding means a significant reduction in services for students with low incidence disabilities. Regional programs anticipate having to lay off staff and increase caseloads of the staff that remain. Across Oregon, this reduction is likely to result in a loss of over 40 FTE in specialized staff that includes:

- Teachers of the Visually Impaired
- Autism Specialists
- Teachers of the Deaf/Heard of Hearing
- Admin and Admin Assistants
- Traumatic Brain Injury Consultants
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Orthopedic Impairment staff
- Speech Language Pathologists

Impact to Services for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities:

In addition to a reduction or elimination of specialized staff, programs also project reductions to or elimination of:

- Direct instruction time for children who are blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing
- Provision of accommodation supports that include braille and hearing aid and amplification management
- Early intervention for children birth to 5 for alternative and augmentative communication
- Services for children with traumatic brain injury
- Professional development and consultation for district staff working with students with low incidence disabilities
- Consultation and resources for parents
- Travel to outlying areas (relying more on tele-practice)
- Repairs to specialized equipment (assistive technology, FMs, large equipment for the orthopedically impaired, etc.)
- Consumable and non-consumable supplies

Impact to School Districts and EI/ECSE Programs:

School districts and EI/ECSE programs will be responsible to fill the gap in services from regional programs to provide a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) for students with low incidence disabilities.

Regional Programs

Serving Oregon students with low-incidence disabilities

Our Mission: Through collaborative partnerships, Oregon's Regional Programs provide educational opportunities to students with low-incidence disabilities. The goal of the program is to help students achieve success through equitable access and specialized supports.

Our Vision: All students will have an education that prepares them to live as contributing citizens in their communities and to succeed in the life they choose.



WE SERVE

197 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1,200 SCHOOLS

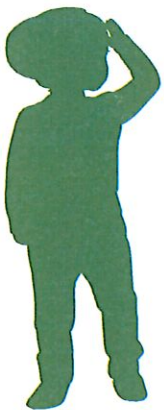
10,122 STUDENTS

IN ALL 36
OREGON
COUNTIES



Low-incidence Disabilities in Oregon

Disabilities are considered low-incidence when they occur in less than 1 percent of the general population.



7,100 Autism Spectrum Disorder

1,327 Deaf/hard of hearing

933 Orthopedically impaired

598 Blind/visually impaired

139 Traumatic brain injury

25 Deafblind

GOVERNOR'S
BUDGET

SERVICE LEVEL
ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION

FUNDING
SHORTFALL

\$22.5m

\$43.5m

\$21m

How the shortfall affects people and programs

MORE ELIGIBLE CHILDREN FOR FEWER SERVICES

An estimated 10,562 students will be eligible for Regional Program services during 2019-21. This is a 34 percent increase compared to 2007. For example, since 2007, 31 percent more children are eligible for autism services, and 27 percent more are eligible for deaf and hard-of-hearing services.

HOW CHILDREN WILL BE AFFECTED

Students will receive fewer direct services, which could negatively affect their educational and functional outcomes. Services might become fragmented as caseloads increase. Students in rural districts will be most impacted.

HOW EDUCATORS WILL BE AFFECTED

Regional Programs could be forced to lay off highly skilled staff. If that happens, many of those specialists would likely be hired out of state, adding to the current shortage of specialized special education providers in the state. School districts would be responsible for filling the gap since every child is entitled to a free and appropriate education.

FUNDING SHORTFALL

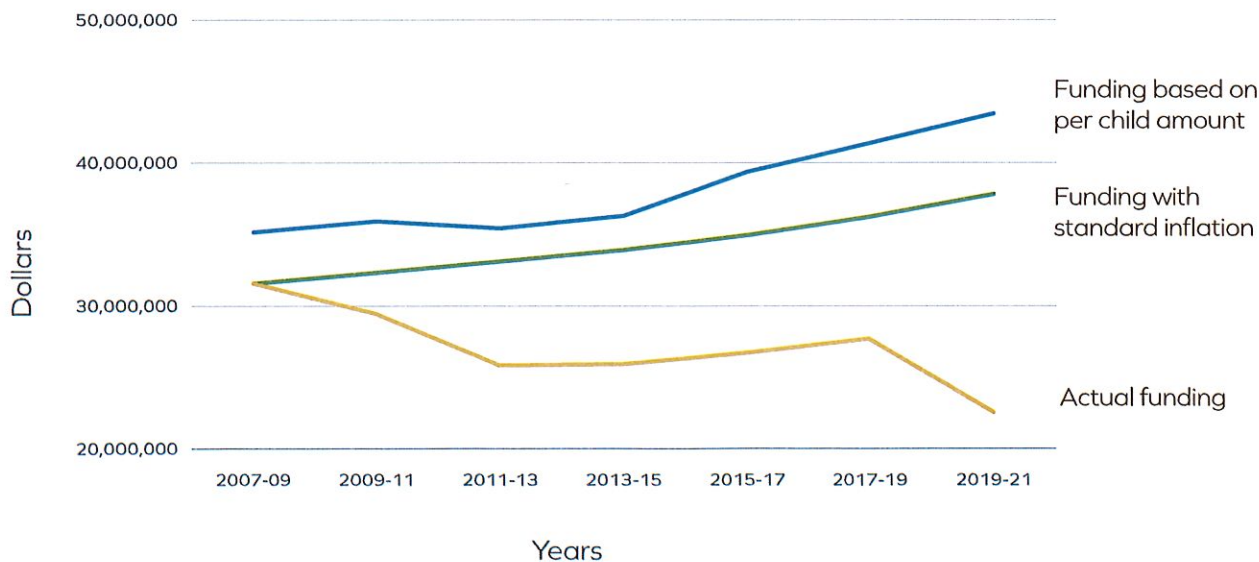
The projected funding level compared to 2007

4% DECREASE IN ACTUAL FUNDING

24% DECREASE COMPARED TO STUDENT GROWTH

\$21m FUNDING SHORTFALL (WHEN ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION AND STUDENT GROWTH)

Regional Programs - General Fund



PARENT TESTIMONIAL

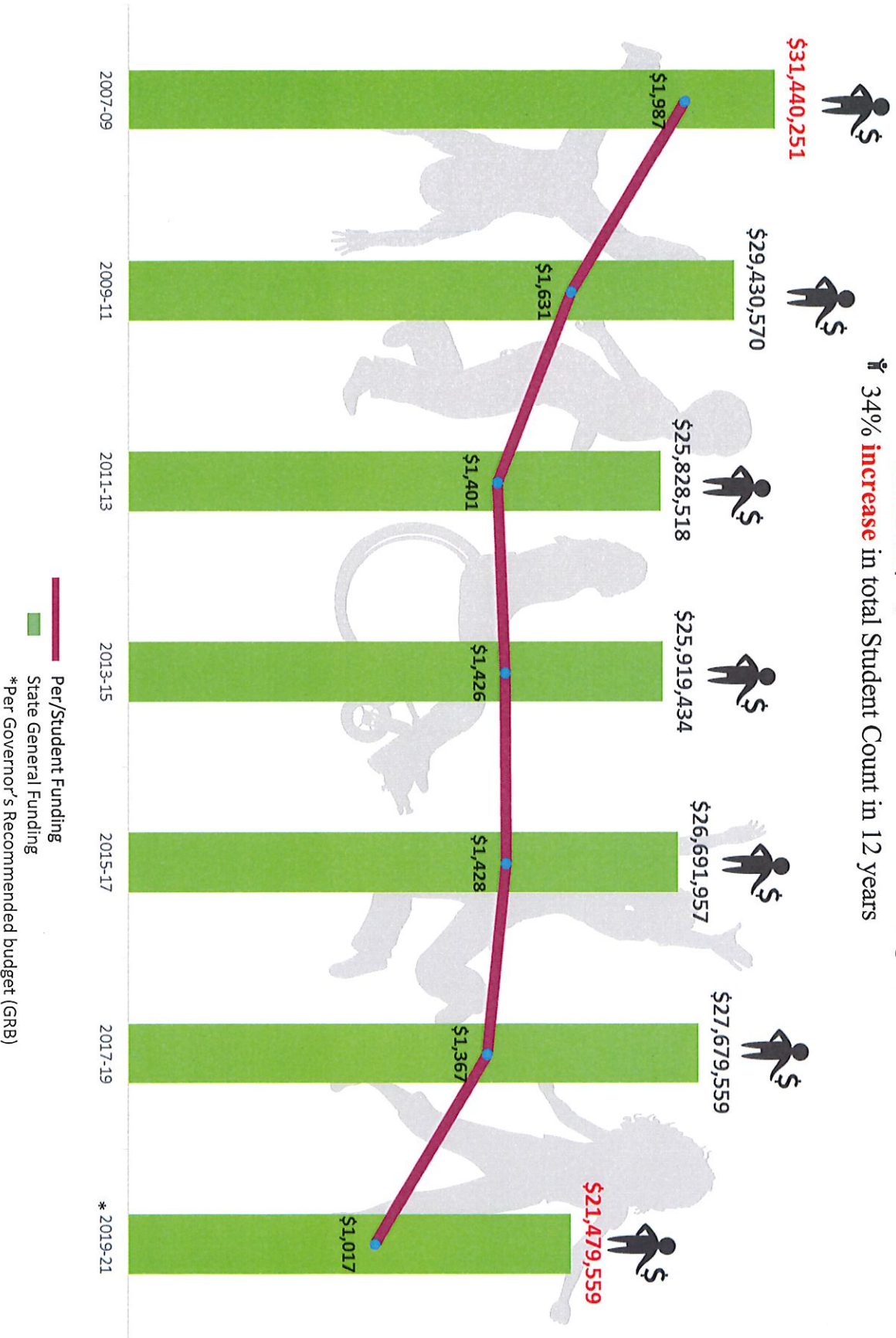
My daughter, Lilia (pictured on front), has cerebral palsy. As a working parent, I love our day care, but her providers are unable to support her all the time. As a result, she spends a lot of time on the floor. Kids run around her, playing. It is apparent she isn't really involved in play. This past month our therapist loaned us

a stander to use at day care. Now Lilia is on the same level as her fellow friends. Kiddos run up to her and talk to her. She loves playing with her friends. Her heart and mine are full - all due to this piece of equipment from Northwest Regional Education Service District.

- Lilia's mom, Kari Lorz

Regional Programs for Low Incidence Disabilities

- \$ 31.8% **decrease** in State General Funding in 12 years
- # 53.4% **decrease** per/student State General Funding in 12 Years
- # 34% **increase** in total Student Count in 12 years



OREGON'S REGIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH LOW INCIDENCE DISABILITIES

Proposed Funding Cut Jeopardizes Essential Services

Regional programs are 8 public educational agencies funded through the state general fund, serving our 197 school districts and their students with low incidence disabilities to achieve levels of expertise and economies of scale that can't be matched at the school district level.

What's the issue?

The [governor's budget for 2019-2021](#) proposes a 20% cut (about 6.2 million) in funding for [Oregon's Regional Programs](#) that provide essential services to children with low incidence disabilities. A cut this deep will jeopardize services that many of Oregon's most vulnerable children rely upon to learn the skills they need to function and thrive.

Why are Regional Programs important?



Some disabilities occur at a low rate and are considered low incidence. This includes deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH), blind and visually impaired (BVI), deafblind (DB), orthopedic impairment (OI), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Children with these disabilities require highly specialized services to access instruction and gain the skills needed to succeed in adult life. It is very difficult and costly for school districts to provide these services on their own. So Regional Programs were established to provide a cost effective way to deliver highly specialized staff and services in neighborhood schools across the state.

What are some examples of Regional Program services?

- A teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) teaching a child who is blind how to read braille
- A teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing teaching a child how use and care for their hearing aids and other amplification devices, learn American Sign Language and develop critical language and literacy concepts
- An autism specialist training classroom staff how to understand and successfully support a child with autism spectrum disorder with significant behavioral challenges
- An assistive technology specialist helping a child with a severe orthopedic impairment and no speech learn how to access and use a communication device
- A traumatic brain injury specialist assisting a child in their transition from hospital back to school following a head injury



What does Regional Programs need to effectively serve children?

The situation is dire. The 2019-2021 budget calls for \$22.5 million, yet \$43.5 million is needed from the Legislature to restore baseline service levels lost since 2007. Regional Programs statewide have been flat funded for over ten years as costs and the number of student has increased. Many services have already been reduced or eliminated.



How can I help?

Urge Governor Kate Brown and the legislature to restore the 20% cut and fully fund Regional Programs at \$43 million; the level necessary to provide Oregon's children with low incidence disabilities with the services they need to make the best of their lives. Write letters to [the Governor](#) and to [your state representative and/or senators](#).

Mahatma Gandhi wrote *“the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.”* Oregonians should take pride that for many years we have had a system in place to effectively serve our children with low incidence disabilities. **Now Regional Programs are in jeopardy and cannot be sustained at the currently proposed funding level.**