

Elizabeth Lawry
Oregon City School District
Candy Lane and Jennings Lodge Elementary Schools
OSCLA

March 2, 2021

Sen. Bill Kennemer
Rep. Mark Meek
Senate Education Committee

Dear Sen. Kennemer, Rep. Meek, and Senate Education Committee,

I am a Speech Language Pathologist who is in her first year in public schools and who is also completing her clinical fellowship to obtain official licensure through the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA). I am advocating for clear guidelines and conversations regarding case load within Oregon public schools.

I support legislation that would keep caseloads at a reasonable level so that SLPs (Speech Language Pathologist's) would not have to sacrifice the quality of care for the quantity of students served. I currently have a caseload of 35 students at the elementary and high school level. As a first year, I could not have dreamed for a better caseload as it takes me longer to complete paperwork and learn processes as a new employee. I have peers who are new to the field who have 10-20 more students on their caseloads in their first year. Those numbers, combined with the extra time that it takes to learn to do SPED (Special Education) processes correctly takes away from time spent lesson planning and researching learning how to implement the most recent innovations of treatment in our field. The benefits of lower caseloads across the state would include: more time for research and development of best practices, more time for more detailed studies of student progress and patterns, more time for developing relationships with staff, more time to develop system-wide interventions for the purposes of Universally Designed instruction, and more time for SLP's to educate allied professionals. Conversely, high caseloads create: increased stress, make paperwork the priority rather than the student, contribute to individuals doing things "the way they have always done it" because they don't have the time or energy to learn and apply something new, and may impact the long term retention of specialized staff members.

Please vote to provide SLP's the opportunity to discuss caseloads within their districts so that they can better serve their students and work for longer in the public school system.

Your constituent,

Elizabeth Lawry M.S, CF-SLP

Oregon City School District.