



March 25, 2021

Dear Chair Leon, Vice-Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Education Committee:

As Executive Director of the Oregon Alliance we are in support of HB3254. The Oregon Alliance is non-profit dedicated to championing and advocating for the health and well-being of children, youth, families and communities across Oregon. Annually, our member organizations serve over 100,000 children, youth and families.

The goal of Long Term Care and Treatment Education Programs (LTCT) is to provide a high quality, therapeutic environment where the child will gain the behavior skills and abilities to function successfully in a non-institutional environment. Treatment programs operate under strict mental health standards. The treatment program must encompass all aspects of the child's life and close coordination of the education and treatment plans is essential. The LTCT programs work with local schools and agencies to facilitate a successful transition back to the local public school and/or community whenever possible.

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) contracts with local educational agencies to provide education programs for students who have been placed by other state agencies, school districts, or private placement in day and residential treatment facilities. The children and youth served by these programs have a variety of therapeutic and educational needs. The programs serve children and youth who require schooling in a protected environment in order to protect the health and safety of themselves and/or others and allow the treatment process to extend into the school day in order to fully implement the treatment plan.

In Forest Grove, these funds are used for special education teachers at the Oak Grove Academy. Other resources are identified to hire mental health specialists that provide program-wide embedded mental health support, alongside high quality academic support targeted to individual student needs. With this targeted support, students thrive, particularly students who may have been asked to leave previous day treatment placements due to the unique co-occurring nature of their needs.

It would be detrimental to remove LTCT funding from the Oak Grove Academy. We believe that all children and youth that are eligible for this funding and supports should have access. At this time, Oregon only provides this funding to a fraction of those eligible.

Thank you for your support of HB3254,

Royce Bowlin
Executive Director