



Mark Mulvihill, *Superintendente*

Kelly Bissinger, *Presidente de la Junta* | Merle Comfort, *Vicepresidente de la Junta*
Dale Bingham | Joe McElligott | Steve Muller | Ryan Neal | Veneda Wagner

March 29, 2021

Members of the Oregon Senate
900 Court St. NE, S-303 Salem
OR 97301

Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon State Senate,

Please consider the following information, presented to you on behalf of the Eastern Oregon Regional Inclusive Services Advisory Council, as evidence of our support for SB5513. Our members represent Region 1 of the Oregon Department of Education’s Regional Programs referred to in SB5513. Our Advisory Council, and the staff of Eastern Oregon Regional Programs at InterMountain Education Service District (IMESD) work to provide effective and appropriate services for students with disabilities from birth to age twenty-one across the 7 counties in Eastern Oregon.

The enclosed document illustrates the need for an additional \$10 million to fund state-wide Regional Programs in the 2021-23 budget biennium. These critically important Regional Programs provide children/students/families with highly specialized support in the areas of Traumatic Brain Injury, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Autism, Blind/Visually impaired, Deaf/Blind and Orthopedic Impairment. The intensive work our educators do on behalf of our students and families is critically needed to assist them in reaching their full potential towards an independent life in areas such as vocational, technical, recreational, academic and independent living in our communities. **Without this increase in funding, specialized services which are required by statute will be decreased for the children/students who need it most.**

In 2020-21 Regional Inclusive Programs in Oregon did not receive Elementary/ Secondary Schools Emergency Recovery (ESSER) Act funds. While stimulus and support funds were provided to other areas of special education services, no direct ESSER funds were allocated to Regional Programs in 20-21, yet the needs of our most vulnerable children rose dramatically during the pandemic.

Funding increases to the Eastern Oregon Regional Program would allow us to dedicate resources to providing additional staffing in the areas of Autism Consultation, as well as to our Regional Equipment Center. Staffing across all specialty areas has decreased due to the 20% decrease in funding described in the enclosed document, with Autism consultation and support for our Regional Equipment Center, which provides equipment to our students across our 7-county area, being hit the hardest. Shoring up these two areas would be a critical step towards providing much needed supports to our rural schools, and in stopping the regressive trend that level funding has had on Regional Programs in Oregon.

Thank you in advance for your support in our efforts to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to all Regionally eligible students across the State of Oregon.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Mark Mulvihill at 541-966-3102 or email him at mark.mulvihill@imesd.k12.or.us

Sincerely,

IMESD Regional Inclusive Services Advisory Committee Members

MISIÓN
VISIÓN

Brindar un excelente servicio al cliente a nuestros distritos escolares en cuatro áreas: educación especial, tecnología, mejoramiento escolar y servicios administrativos.

IMESD se esfuerza por asegurar el éxito de todos los niños proporcionando servicios equitativos para cerrar la brecha de oportunidades. Estamos comprometidos con los valores del antirracismo y el multiculturalismo.

Regional Inclusive Services Advisory Council Roster (RISAC)

Name	Title	email
Winnie Burnett	Parent	winnie@wtechlink.us
Barry Nemec	SpEd Director, Baker SD	barry.nemec@bakersd.org
Lynda Wingo	SpEd Director, Wallowa Co. ESD	lwingo@r18esd.org
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Tonya Smith	Director of Regional Programs, IMESD	tonya.smith@imesd.k12.or.us
Chris Cronin	School Board Director, Grant SD	croninville@gmail.com
Cade Burnette	EI/ECSE Director, IMESD	cade.burnette@imesd.k12.or.us
Mark Mulvihill	Superintendent, IMESD	mark.mulvihill@imesd.k12.or.us

Regional Inclusive Services

Providing essential education and related services for children with specialized, high needs disabilities to allow inclusion to their neighborhood schools and communities across Oregon.

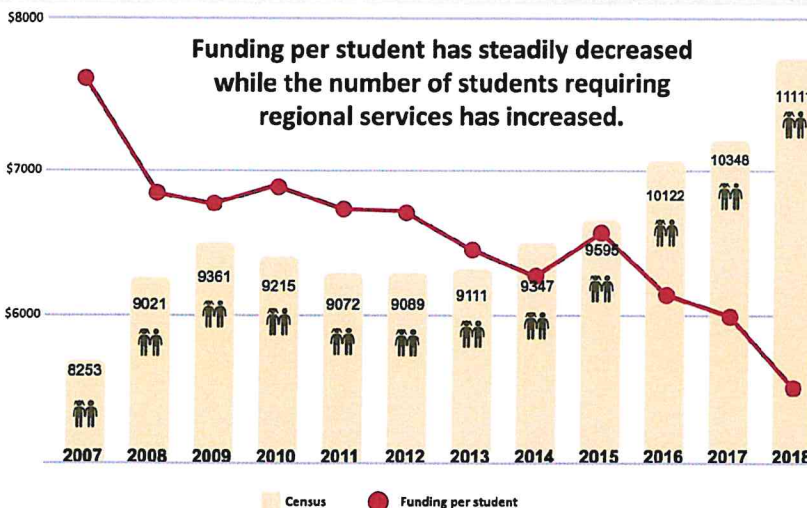
Legislative Request

- Additional funding of \$10 million from the general fund for the 2021-2023 biennium to begin to restore service levels reduced since 2009.
- Passage of Senate Bill 53 to examine Regional Inclusive Services and long-term adequate funding.
- To achieve adequate service levels, we estimate a need of an additional \$50 million in general fund dollars.



2021-2023 Priorities

- Recruit and retain teachers of the visually impaired, teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing and deafblind consultants.
- Restore autism services to 2009 levels (decreasing caseloads, increasing direct service and evaluation services).
- Increase capacity to support and engage families.
- Increase student technology access.



Funding History

2009-11 Total Funds:	\$62 million
2015-17 Total Funds:	\$58 million
2017-19 Total Funds:	\$62 million
2019-21 Total Funds:	\$62 million
2021-23 Total Funds:	\$61 million

** Adjusting for inflation, total funding fell by more than 20% since 2007-2009.*





Over **11,500** students served between 2019-2021

- Autism Spectrum Disorder 8400
- Blind/Visually Impaired 900
- Deafblind 150
- Deaf or hard of hearing 1700
- Orthopedic Impairment 1600
- Traumatic Brain Injury 250

More than half of students have multiple regional eligibilities.

Advantages

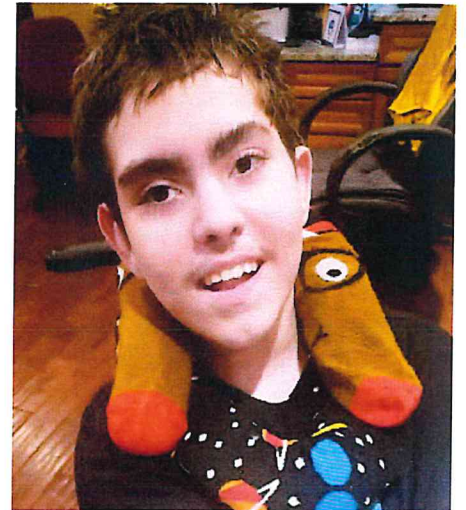
- Assembling regional teams with deep levels of expertise and specialized licensure ensures Oregon students receive critical services despite national shortages of trained personnel.
- Creating an economy of scale to serve students with the most complex needs in their neighborhood schools regardless of size or location of district.
- Assuring quality and continuity of service for Oregon's most complex and critically impacted children.

Parent Testimonials

“Regional Services have had a tremendous impact on the quality of education and resources my child receives. The program guided us through every step of the services process and allowed our daughter to receive proper education, audiology services and speech therapy.”

The entire staff from the counselors, the deaf educators, the speech-language therapists, and audiologists have become our village of support allowing our daughter to make great strides and avoid falling behind academically, socially and vocally while keeping up with her technology needs. We have met and connected with many other families who have also benefited from these important programs.”

-Ana



“Regional Services have been life changing for my family. Their highly skilled team provides services to my kids that helped them learn how to talk and hear, something I never thought possible. Both of my children have profound hearing loss and when we moved to Oregon several years ago, they could only communicate with sign language. They had never worn hearing aids that worked for them. I had given up hope on verbal communication. The staff fit them with a different brand of hearing aids and suddenly my kids were listening and starting to talk.”

There are so many options for my kids that I would have not known existed without guidance from Regional Programs.”

-Alexandra

