

**March 29, 2021**

**Dear Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature,**

**I am currently a Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) for Eastern Oregon Regional Programs, in Eastern Oregon. I now work for the same agency that helped prepare me for life through the early intervention program and school age program as a young child with a visual impairment. When I was going through school the funding for low-incident disabilities was different than it is now and at least in Eastern Oregon the TVI's only served in two counties. When I was in high school there were four TVI's serving 2 counties, now my experience is that I serve anywhere from 6-5 counties, and can travel up to 3 hours away from Pendleton, Or to see a student.**

**I am forever grateful to my TVI Linda Moore for all the skills that she taught me about advocacy, accommodations, technology, being a good citizen, and many other skills. My orientation and mobility specialist helped guide life long skills that help me travel with my cane and now my guide dog. I have since graduated from high school, community college, and university to become a teacher, in which I strive to meet all my students' unique needs, which include**

**teaching braille, technology, training and consolation to staff, orientation and mobility, and many other areas.**

**Please consider fully funding Regional program funding for student that are blind/visually impaired, deafblind, deaf/hard of hearing, autistic, and traumatic brain injuries.**

**Sincerely,**

**Sharon L. Zenger**

**M. Ed of Special Education, COMS**

Regional Funding Advocacy

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you on behalf of my son, a student served generously by the Regional Programs at the InterMountain ESD in Eastern Oregon. As a parent of one of the students they serve, please consider my sincerity when I tell you that this program deserves any dollar amount requested. They serve a *high* needs population of students, for which the *most* support is needed, and they do it *well*. That being said, they need more support to continue to do it well, serving the students with as much time as needed according to their support needs, and not burning out the therapists while doing it as case numbers grow.

I have witnessed an immense amount of care and effort put in to my son's wellbeing by this program when he entered into it at only a couple months old. Since that time, he has required more professional care than I knew was even possible. Between all the specialty appointments I was trying to juggle to continue helping him thrive to the best of my ability, the therapists in the Regional Programs stepped up to help. We were provided equipment and supports I didn't know existed and didn't know we needed. If it weren't for their expertise and care, many struggles may have compounded with his development physically.

Please, increase their funding to further better the lives of the students they're serving and those they have yet to meet. The therapists and people working behind this program have changed our lives. Over and over again, they show up, find the resources, get the equipment, train the team members, and advocate for my son. We are blessed by their dedication and knowledge, as others will be, I have full confidence.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Courtney Carter



# Kimberly Sorensen

75227 Hagen Rd, Pendleton, OR 97801 541-969-2853

12/14/18

To The Oregon Legislation:

My name is Kimberly Sorensen. My daughter is Ellen Paulsen. Ellen is 15 years old and manages her malady of uveitis with grace and dignity. She is legally blind but functions at normal standards, and even excels in many subjects. She participates in regular high school classes and joins in extracurricular activities such as: acting, choir, speech and debate and swim team.

Ellen and I are very grateful for our highly esteemed resource and friend, Sharon Zenger, employed by Eastern Oregon Regional Services-Vision Department. Sharon is a low vision aide/teacher and has helped Ellen tremendously by showing intense interest in managing her low vision at school. She is interactive with Ellen, as well as all of Ellen's teachers, making sure she is using every device possible to ensure the best education for Ellen. All teachers appreciate the effort Sharon puts forth, too. For example, explaining how to enlarge paper assignments to the proper size and using the Smart Board in connection with her iPad and CCTV.

Sharon provided The Ruby, also. This tool enables Ellen to do homework, get assignments finished and read anything assigned.

Regional Vision Services gives tremendous support to families with disabilities. I am deeply grateful to this organization for providing us with what we need. I believe without these services our children would be struggling at school and not receiving the proper education. My wish is to have the continued support of Regional Vision Services. It is an invaluable resource for Oregon families with disabilities.

Thank you for your time and please know we are always hoping to have people like Sharon to help guide our children as they navigate through their impressionable years and gain the confidence they need to succeed into the future.

Sincerely,

*Kimberly Sorensen*

Kimberly Sorensen

January 2, 2019

To the Honorable Members of the Oregon Legislature:

I am writing on behalf of Lone Community Charter School in Lone, Oregon to express my support for Eastern Oregon's Regional Programs. Our school is part of the InterMountain Education Service District. As a new Special Education Teacher, our district has been very supportive of me. I have had the privilege of receiving visits from one of our autism specialists Susan Rodgers. This has been essential as we have several high needs students here. One of them is a kindergartener and the support we have had from Mrs. Rodgers has been absolutely critical in helping us best meet the needs of this particular student. This student is nonverbal and Mrs. Rodgers has done so much for us such as helping us to create visual schedules and picture cards. She has been able to observe our students and offer suggestions and support. She has provided us with activities and sensory materials to help the students. Her position, which is supported by the Eastern Oregon's Regional Programs, has made us more successful overall and without necessary funding, high need students will not receive the same level of services.

The Oregon Governor's initial budget proposed not to increase, as had been widely hoped for, but to decrease the Regional Program's budget by 5.9 million dollars. This budget cut could be devastating to our services if it goes through. I am writing to request that funding for our program not be decreased at all. If at all possible, let's increase it so we can better serve our young people. I don't know what I would have done without the support I've received from Mrs. Rodgers and many others as well.

Thank You!

Julia Finch  
Special Education Teacher  
Lone Community Charter School

[julia.finch@ionesd.org](mailto:julia.finch@ionesd.org)