

My name is Paul Fields and I currently serve as Chairperson for Serendipity's Board of Directors.

It's important to clearly understand the population of kids that Serendipity has served for 41 years now. Imagine a typical elementary or middle school population and think of that as 100 percent of kids. Now envision the top one or two percent of kids who are in greatest need of specialized services for learning, skills development, and behavior management. In most cases these kids receive a higher level of service at their school delivered by teachers and staff with specialized training.

Now take that one or two percent of kids and stretch that out into 100 percent. Again, imagine the top one or two percent of kids in greatest need of specialized services for learning, skills development, and behavior management. These are the kids that Serendipity serves. It is no understatement that this is the most challenging of school populations, and for example the reason that some kids need a 1:1 student to staff ratio. This intensive level of service helps them stay focused on their learning and practice, often minute by minute, the behavioral and social skills that will one day let them re-enter public school, this time equipped for success.

Serendipity has been in their current facility now for thirty years, all the while the Portland metro area and its population have grown – as have the conditions that make Serendipity a critical resource for our school districts. Without the services that Serendipity provides, the prospects for this population as they reach adulthood can be troubling. This is why it's now time to reinvest in Serendipity's mission for the sake of their future, and consequently the health of our communities.