



Mission: Empower Oregon families experiencing disability in their pursuit of a whole life by expanding awareness, growing community, and equipping families.

March 2, 2023

Support Passing SB 819 – Abbreviated School Days

FACT Oregon is a family-led nonprofit that works toward a future where communities are accessible, inclusive, and empower the self-determination of people with disabilities. We support families, youth with disabilities, and partners to hold high expectations, navigate special education and disability systems and advocate for the supports needed to thrive at home, in school, and in community. **Since 2012, we have served as the state and federally designated Parent Training and Information Center [PTI] for special education.**

In its role as the PTI, FACT Oregon spends a great deal of time supporting families navigating the special education system and has been tracking support requests related to abbreviated days since 2015. These requests continue to this day.

The families calling for support do not agree with their child's school day being reduced; do not believe they were able to participate in the decision-making process and/or they feel that decisions made are influenced by a lack of training or availability of school personnel to provide support.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] ensures that students with disabilities have available a Free Appropriate Public Education [FAPE] that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the student's UNIQUE NEEDS and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. AND it calls out parents as members of the IEP team and are entitled to participate in the process. Yet, despite this, we still find that students with disabilities are more likely to have school days cut short than their nondisabled peers.

FACT Oregon respectfully asks that you pass SB 819 and allow students to have access to the education that they legally have a right to. We believe it is a protective measure to ensure that families can meaningfully participate in educational decisions afforded to them by IDEA. We strongly believe we need to shift the focus of shortened day away from children with disabilities onto districts to ensure that staff are provided adequate training and information to support students, and to manage limited resources to ensure that the most vulnerable students receive an equitable education.

Christy Reese, Executive Director
FACT Oregon

From the desk of *Sara A. Belle Blouin*