

February 6, 2023

Senate Committee on Education re: SB291  
Chair Sen Dembrow and Vice Chair Weber

I am writing regarding my now 14 year old child's experience with restraint and seclusion in Eugene 4J SD when they were in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. All though this was 6 years ago, the impacts and trauma is still very present in our lives.

Because of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system that Eugene 4J has been the petrie dish for the University of Oregon's school system for many years it was deeply ingrained in what caused my child to escalate in their special education classroom at Corridor Elementary School. Please look at when University of Oregon began spreading PBIS in the state and the increase of incidents of room clears, restraint, seclusion and shortened school days.

Much of what was happening to my child was Tier 2-3 PBIS which is equivalent to Applied Behavioral Analysis a practice used with Autistic children that is widely known to cause PTSD and that Oregon Health Authority is currently having listening sessions to try to have more oversight of.

My child who is Black and Autistic experienced much anti-Black racism and ableism in Eugene 4j schools from peers and staff that was compounded by a behavioral approach that only looked at externalized behaviors of an understandably anxious child. PBIS does not care if somebody just called my child the N-word or if they can't handle the sensory assault of the typing software their classmates are using in the SPED room that beep loudly every time an error is made. PBIS only cares about compliance and using token economies that do not work for the kids who need the most support.

On a day I brought my child in to the principal's office to report a racial incident from a peer and the principal responded to my child being told they should be excluded from a school activity because they aren't really American because you are African American by saying "you both call each other names" and no empathy for the racialized incident. Without a trusted adult having their back at school, they had an escalation.

I watched from the hallway as the principal of Corridor who is still in Eugene 4J put my child in the seclusion room which was padded in the SPED room. The principal had his knee in the door holding the door shut so that it wasn't fully illegal as my child screamed, cried and tried to get out. I also witnessed this same principal hold them behind a metal cart in a corner of the room while they were escalated. After these experience my child there after talked about being put in a padded cell and began to call school academic prison. School refusal set in because school had become traumatic.

After the incidents and continued removal of all things that were fun at school, I would not send my child back until we had an IEP meeting which ended up being a bait and switch that

ultimately pushed my child out of school. We have home schooled for the last 5 years. This was not by choice. My child has had to recover from the trauma of these 2<sup>nd</sup> grade experiences. Although our story happened 6 years ago, I am in a local online parent support group with over 1000 members and see these stories every week. In fact a horrific story about a disabled child being dragged to a seclusion room at an Elementary School in Eugene 4j was shared this month.

The point I want to make is not only that seclusion and restraint is traumatizing but that the PBIS and ABA systems used to try to force compliance are the cause of the escalations that lead to restraint and seclusion. We MUST look at the root of the problem and move to more relational approaches in our schools such as Collaborative Problem Solving which is beginning to be piloted in some Oregon districts including Lane ESD. This transition to seeing children in their full humanity is not happening fast enough.

Sincerely,

Amy Fellows  
Eugene, OR