

To: House Committee on Education
RE: Support for HB 2959

Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Wright and Hudson and members of the committee—

I am in my ninth year of serving our public schools as speech-language pathologist and I am here to express my support for House Bill 2959.

In 2016, The Oregon Speech-Language & Hearing Association sent a letter to special education directors across the state advocating for speech-language pathologists to carry a caseload no larger than 40 students. This number was based on research showing that students progress fastest toward their goals when group sizes consist of three or fewer students, and speech-language pathologists carry a caseload of fewer than 40 students. I have attached a copy of this letter for your reference.

When speech-language pathologists' caseloads are too high, which is a norm across Oregon school districts, we are forced to adjust our model of service provision to match what we are able to do within our limited schedules, and not what is best for student progress. In other words, we end up putting more students in a group and providing a lower frequency of sessions or less overall service time. This is in direct conflict with IDEA, which mandates us to develop services based on the unique needs of each student—services that allow students to advance appropriately toward attaining their annual goals. It also conflicts with the professional and ethical standards put out by the Oregon Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (our State licensing board), which state: "Individuals shall evaluate the effectiveness of services rendered and of products dispensed and shall provide services or dispense products only when benefit can reasonably be expected." How can we reasonably expect students to benefit from speech-language pathology services if we cannot provide the appropriate frequency and duration of intervention?

We need a taskforce to examine how the realities of our professions compare to our scopes of practice/licensure requirements. I strongly encourage the committee to vote YES on HB 2959. Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Dixon, CCC-SLP
Salem, Oregon



May 1, 2016

Dear Director:

Improving student outcomes is the heart of what you do.

The Oregon Speech-Language and Hearing Association (OSHA) is the professional association representing more than 1,640 Speech-Language Pathologists in the state of Oregon. In alliance with our national professional organization, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), we want to help you achieve better outcomes for your students with Communication Disorders, including those with language-learning disabilities.

Research indicates that students with Communication Disorders need specially-designed instruction on an IEP for **shorter periods of time when treatment groups are small (no more than 3 students)** and when Speech-Language Pathologists have **caseloads of fewer than 40 students**. (Schooling 2000, 2003; Karr & Schooling 2001; Chiang & Rylance 2000). Please scroll down to see outcomes graphs. Large caseloads for Speech-Language Pathologists can have a direct impact on FAPE and can put districts **at risk for due process complaints**. (Brandel & Loeb, 2011) Additionally, a report released February 8, 2016, by the U.S. General Accountability Office, indicates that the burden of paperwork associated with providing Special Education services is **"onerous and duplicative"** and that critical Special Education funds could be better spent **reducing caseloads**.

When planning for the special education staffing needs of your district, we encourage you to support the recommended caseload size of fewer than 40 students per full-time Speech-Language Pathologist in order to maximize student outcomes, minimize the potential for due process complaints, and align your district with congressional recommendations.

Please feel free to contact OSHA Board representative Debra Levinson (dtlevinson@comcast.net) with any questions:

Our very best wishes for your success,

Karen A. Aguilera
President, OSHA

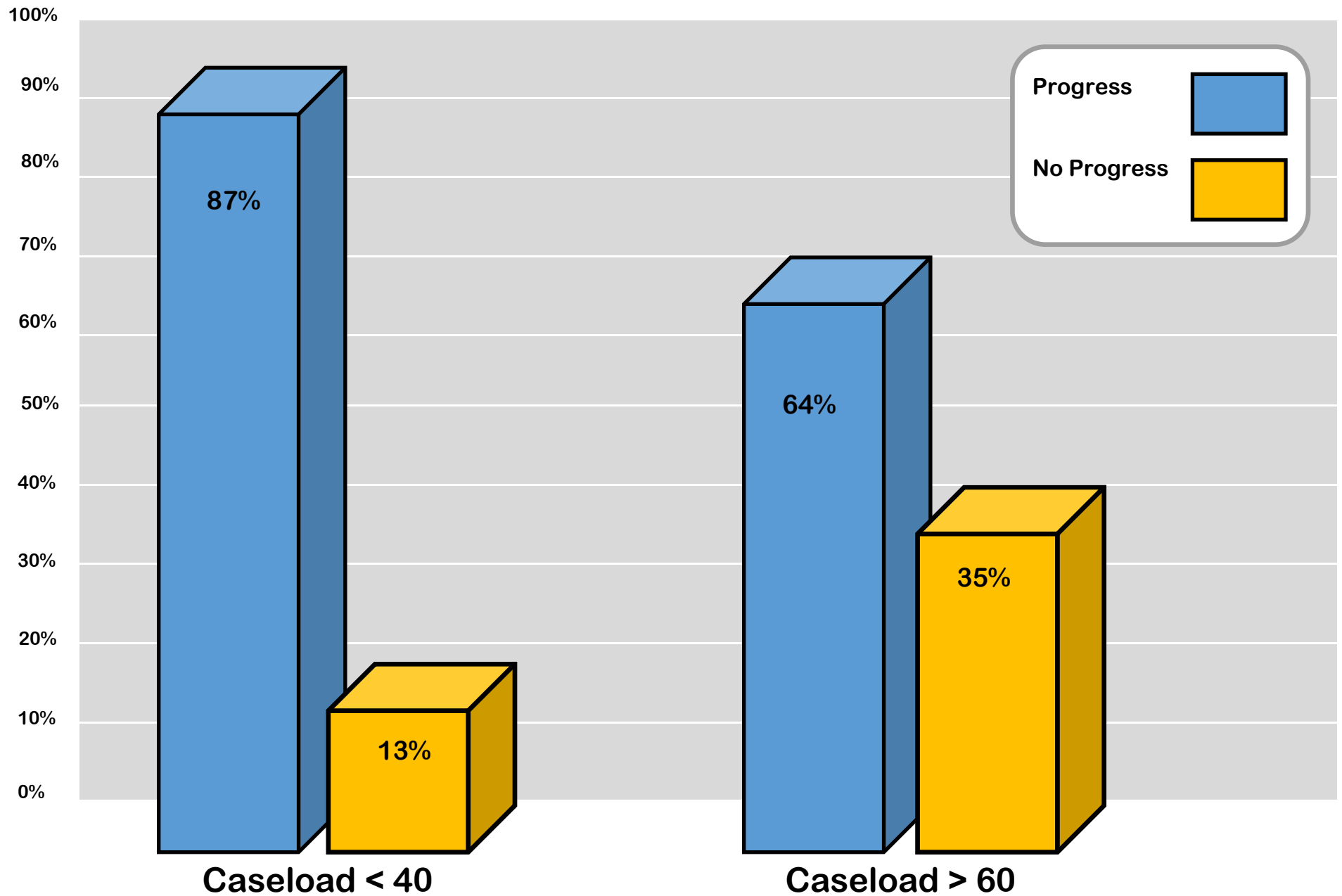
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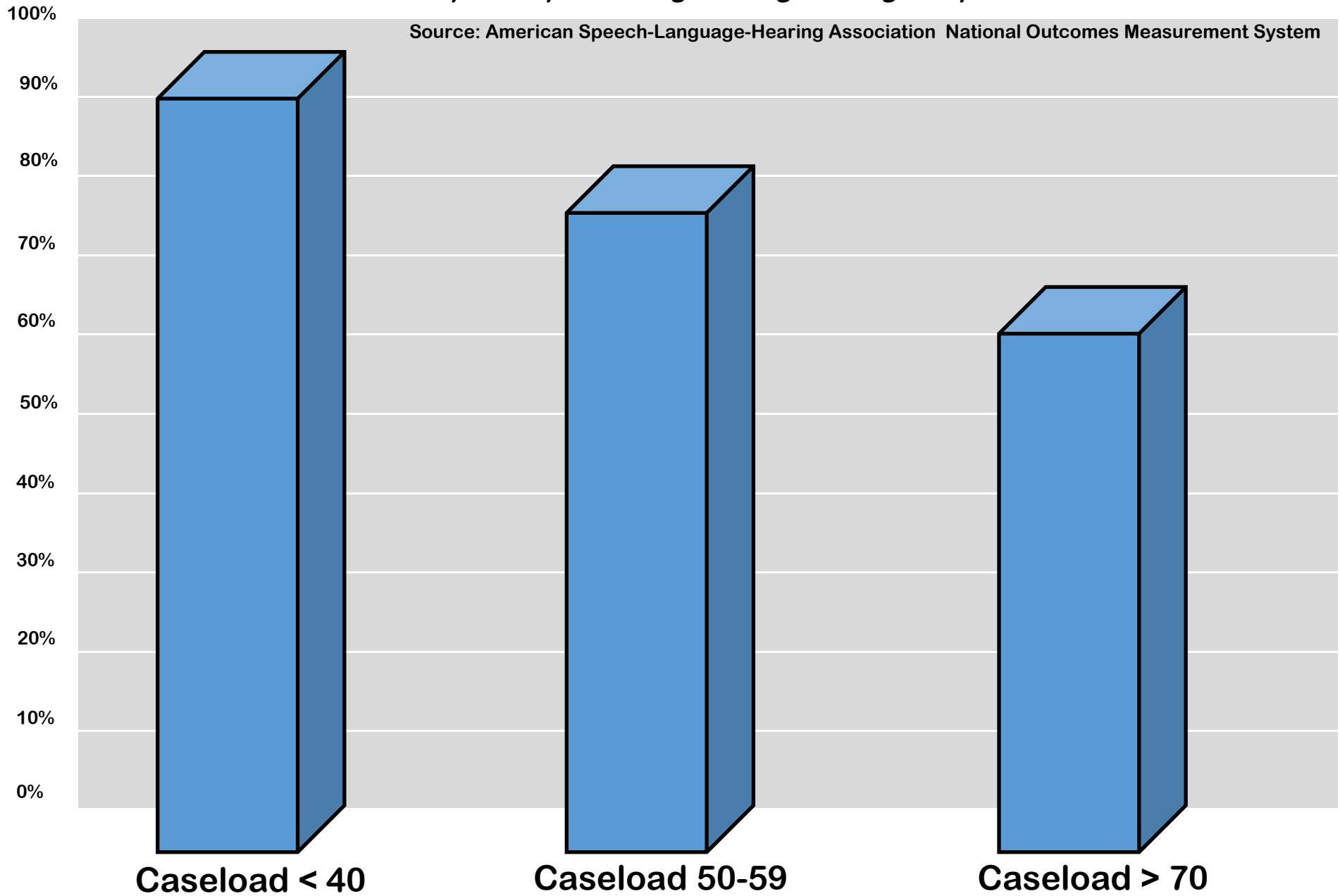
Progress on Speech Sound Production related to caseload size.

Source: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Outcomes Measurement System



Percentage of teachers responding “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to the statement:

“The student demonstrates improved prereading/reading/reading comprehension skills.”



Progress on Speech Sound Production by service delivery model.

Source: American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Outcomes Measurement System

