

March 14, 2023

TO: Senate Education Committee

RE: Support for SB 575, Students With Disabilities Success Plan

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Member of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 575. My name is Tamara Falls, and I live in Portland.

I'm writing to support SB 575, the Student with Disabilities Success Plan. SB 575 is a top priority of the 2023 Children's Agenda. Students with disabilities face disproportionate systemic inequities, which have led to the worst outcomes of any student group in our state. Students with disabilities have the lowest graduation rates in Oregon, experience a forty-plus gap in basic reading and math by eighth grade, and continue to be disciplined twice as often as other students.

Ableism is the root cause of these inequities among students with disabilities and must be addressed. It is essential to implement policies and practices that promote inclusion, accessibility, and equity for students with disabilities to eliminate systemic barriers. This includes ensuring professional development on best practices for teachers and staff, collecting better data, and prioritizing the engagement of families and students with disabilities through the Special Education Advisory Councils.

I urge your support of SB 575 to implement targeted strategies for students with disabilities to ensure their educational success and dismantle ongoing inequities that lead to disproportionate educational outcomes. I urge your support of SB 575 to establish the Students with Disabilities Success Plan so that all students have the resources they need to thrive.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Tamara Falls