

Submitter: Karen Wooten

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure: SB575

Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Karen Wooten, I live in Klamath Falls, and I am the parent of a child that receives special education services.

Throughout my daughters time in school, she has struggled to access equitable education due to lack of professional development.

She experienced abbreviated days all of last year, and part of this year due to school staff not being able to support her needs while at school. Although she is essentially back to full school days this year, I receive a substantial amount of phone calls to pick her up when she is overwhelmed, and emotional, or school staff cannot communicate with her to see what her needs are.

My daughter uses an AAC device to communicate in school that many on her support team do not utilize to communicate with her, due to lack of training on the device. Being unable to properly communicate, leaves her unable to fully access the same education as her peers which then leaves her feeling excluded. Exclusion then results in lower self esteem, anxiety, frustration, and her falling further behind.

At my daughters most recent IEP meeting, the team had written in her progress report that my daughter benefits from her shortened schedule due to the fact that it allows her to miss writing most days, being that she struggles with it due to her disability. Additionally my daughter has not participated in Physical education for the last 2 school years due to staff being unsure as to how to provide adaptive PE supports for her.

If professional developments were available to staff, I feel that she would have access to supports that would allow for her to have the ability to better communicate, participate, and be able to fully access her education in all school settings with her peers.

I often wonder what communication and educational barriers she could have already overcome, if professional developments were in place.

I urge you to support SB 575, so that the professional development needed to support students like my daughter, will allow her and others to have full equitable

access to education like their peers.

Thank you for your time.