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Dr. Charlene Williams

Director of the Department of Education

SB 868: Regional Inclusive Services Funding Report
Senate Education Committee
January 27, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber and members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Zoe Larmer and I am the Government Relations Director for the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 868, which aims to give the Legislature the best information on which to base their decision-making for adequate service levels for Regional Inclusive Services (RIS).

Regional Inclusive Services provides critical services to students who experience low-incidence disabilities, including children who experience disabilities in the following categories:

- Deaf or hard of hearing,
- Blind or visually impaired,
- Autism spectrum disorder,
- Orthopedic impairment,
- Deafblind, or
- Traumatic brain injury.

SB 868 would direct the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to report to the Legislature on the funding levels necessary to provide efficient and effective services to students under Regional Inclusive Services. This proposal also calls for the development of a funding formula to address long-standing funding challenges for Regional Inclusive Services.

For nearly 40 years, Oregon's regionalized service model has sought to provide equitable access to resources and support for children with low-incidence, high-impact disabilities. The system was originally designed to ensure equitable access to services regardless of geographic location, disability type, age group, eligibility criteria, service delivery patterns, or funding and administrative structures.

Regional Inclusive Services funding per student has steadily declined since its peak in the 2009-11 biennium. This decline impacts the ability of RIS to effectively serve its growing population, which included over 14,600 children and students during the 2023-24 school year. SB 868 seeks to address this gap by providing the data necessary to evaluate and propose funding levels that align with student needs and legislative priorities.



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These changes have no anticipated fiscal impact, and it is important to note, this bill does not obligate the Legislature to fund RIS at the reported level. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments, and we welcome any questions you may have. We urge your support of SB 868.

Respectfully submitted,

Zoe Larmer

Government Relations Director