

# Regional Inclusive Services

Children who experience blindness, deafness and other disabilities are just as capable of learning – but they have unique instructional and equipment needs.

Regional Inclusive Services is the name of Oregon's program that ensures students with specific disabilities can access their civil right to an education in their neighborhood school. We are one of nine agencies contracted to deliver these services.



## Our Program in a Nutshell

"Recently, I had to shift a reading intervention specialist to support a child with autism, taking away this literacy resource from all children. This happens all the time because the ESD is not funded to provide the level of service my district needs. The quantity of kids who need services has increased, and their needs are more complex, while funding has stayed the same."

*Misty Wharton, Nestucca Valley  
School District Superintendent*



We serve 3,227 total students in our region:

- 2,674** with autism spectrum disorder
- 129** who are blind or visually impaired
- 15** who are deafblind
- 252** who are deaf or hard of hearing
- 173** with orthopedic impairment
- 11** with traumatic brain injury

*Based on Dec. 2023 census*

## What We Do



### Teach students to participate

in school and life by using a cane, assistive technology, braille literacy and other strategies.



### Teach students self-advocacy skills

so they have the confidence and knowledge to ask for what they need.



### Supply equipment to students

like braille embossers, walkers, communication devices and amplification systems.



### Coach and train the adults

in our students' lives, i.e. their teachers and family, to support their success.



# Our Advocacy Priorities

- 01 Adopt the recommendations that precipitated from SB53, specifically around the funding formula:** "The legislative assembly shall appropriate from the general fund \$122,443,496 for Regional Inclusive Services in 2025-2027. Thereafter each subsequent biennium the legislative assembly shall appropriate from the general fund the prior year's base amount times the rate of students times a 4.20 inflation rate."
- 02 Continue to invest in efforts to increase educator workforce diversity and address workforce shortages,** including Grow-Your-Own (i.e. current employees in less specialized positions becoming specialists by completing the needed coursework and practical experiences), Apprenticeship, and Pathway programs. Workforce shortages exists for special education teachers, EI/ECSE specialists, teachers of the deaf, teachers of the blind and visually impaired, deafblind interveners, American Sign Language interpreters, orientation and mobility specialists, audiologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, autism specialists/consultants, and school psychologists. RIS administrators are working together to implement strategies to mitigate these staffing challenges.

"I like to keep an open chain of communication between me and my teachers. It might be new for them and it's a new class for me, but together, we can make it work. In the classroom, there is always a lot of trial and error and it does take more work, but in the end, students like me can always figure it out. It feels great to be part of this community because **I'm held as equal to them and the same as everyone else, even though I carry a very colorful stick that makes a lot of sound.**"

*Elwin Rivera, Student in Blind & Visually Impaired Student Fund (BVIS) Program*

## Per Student Funding Over Time

