

Submitter: Brandon Eddy

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce  
Development

Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: HB3053

Dear Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3053, which allocates funding to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to the University of Oregon to support a pilot program training graduate-level students in speech-language pathology to use a family-centered approach when serving children with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) needs in a traditional overnight summer camp setting.

As a speech-language pathologist and clinical educator specializing in AAC, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact that comprehensive, immersive, and family-centered training has on both AAC users and the future professionals who serve them. The proposed program is uniquely positioned to enhance the skills of graduate students while providing an inclusive and enriching habilitative experience for children and families across Oregon.

AAC users and their families often face significant barriers to accessing services that support meaningful communication and participation in community activities. A summer camp setting designed around family-centered intervention offers an invaluable opportunity for children using AAC to engage with peers, strengthen their communication skills, and develop greater independence, all within an environment that fosters inclusion and empowerment. Additionally, caregivers and family members benefit from hands-on training and support, which are crucial for reinforcing communication strategies beyond the camp experience.

Further, this pilot program will play a crucial role in addressing the shortage of well-trained AAC specialists in Oregon. By providing graduate students with high-quality, immersive training, HB 3053 supports the development of a workforce that is better prepared to meet the diverse needs of AAC users in clinical, educational, and community settings. The experience gained through this initiative will have a lasting impact, building capacity and expanding access to AAC services throughout the state for years to come.

For these reasons, I urge your support for HB 3053. This investment will not only enrich the lives of AAC users and their families but also strengthen Oregon's capacity to provide equitable and effective communication support to individuals who use AAC.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brandon Eddy, M.A., CCC-SLP

Oregon Speech-Language Hearing Association - Vice President of Scientific and  
Educational Affairs

Speech-Language Pathologist