

Submitter: Kirsten Carr
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2448

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Kirsten Carr. I am writing in strong support of Oregon HB2448, which would provide critical financial support to help school districts meet the needs of students with high special needs. As a parent and as a healthcare professional, I know firsthand the profound impact that appropriate services can have on the development and well-being of these students.

HB2448 is a vital step toward addressing the inequity in special education funding. The bill seeks to provide state-funded subsidies to school districts to help offset the high costs of providing intensive special education services. This funding would ensure that local districts are not unfairly burdened with the financial responsibility of supporting students with the highest needs—services that should be guaranteed and funded by the state. Currently, local districts are struggling to cover the costs of providing specialized services like speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioral support for students with complex needs. This burden leaves many districts unable to meet the needs of their students, especially those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas.

As a physician, I can speak to the essential role that early, individualized support plays in the health and success of children with special needs. When students receive the appropriate support at the right time, they are far more likely to succeed academically and socially, setting them up for long-term success. However, the current system, where local districts are expected to bear the financial responsibility for these services, is unsustainable and inequitable. The result is a patchwork of support systems that vary by district and region, leading to disparities in access to necessary services.

HB2448 would help ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, have access to the services they are entitled to. By providing a state-funded subsidy, the bill seeks to remove the financial strain on local districts, which are often already stretched thin. The bill's provisions would allow for a more predictable funding model, enabling districts to plan and deliver services consistently without fear of funding shortages or budget cuts.

As a parent, I am deeply concerned about the disparities that exist in our education system. Children in wealthier districts often receive the resources they need, while those in less-resourced areas struggle to access even basic services. The funding

provisions in HB2448 would help address these inequities by ensuring that all districts, regardless of their local tax base, can provide the services needed for children with high special needs.

The state has a responsibility to ensure that all students, particularly those with disabilities, are provided a fair and equal opportunity to succeed. Children with high special needs require more intensive services, but those services should not depend on the wealth of their school district. HB2448 takes a critical step toward making sure that the state is fully funding the services these students need, reducing the burden on local districts and creating a more equitable system for all.

As a physician, I understand that early, comprehensive support for children with special needs also leads to long-term benefits for society. Children who receive the right services early in life are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and economically. This, in turn, leads to healthier, more productive communities. Investing in these children is not just the right thing to do—it's a smart investment in the future of Oregon.

I strongly urge you to support HB2448. By passing this bill, we will create a more equitable, sustainable, and effective system for supporting students with high special needs, ensuring they have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kirsten Carr, MD