

HB2448 Testimony: Sarah Gabbart, Portland, OR

Greetings, Chairperson Alonso Leon and Committee Members, my name is Sarah Gabbart and I am the parent of a child who receives special education services through PPS. I wanted to voice my support for this bill, which seeks better funding for special education throughout the great state of Oregon. I simply cannot describe how much the help of high-quality, highly trained educators, specialists, and paraprofessionals have been in my son's educational life. Prior to being served by early intervention through Multnomah County, my son was asked to leave four preschools for disruptive behavior while we frantically searched for help addressing his developmental delays. We worked with private doctors and therapy groups, including a developmental pediatrician to help him be able to meaningfully participate in school, knowing kindergarten was right around the corner.

Thanks to the help of special educators, he was evaluated and an IEP was developed to meet his needs for the 24-25 school year. I can tell you that now, halfway through the school year, he is thriving. His exceptional teacher, the school's special educator, the counselor, and, his favorite, the paraprofessional, have all made such a lasting impact in his experience of school. In fact, their efforts have not only made learning easier for him, they have also helped him develop lagging social skills that we are seeing at home and out in the world. Thanks to the support of special education services, my son is able to attend school and is now on a path that sets him up for future scholastic success. While he is considered a student with low to moderate needs, I know many of his schoolmates benefit from a higher level of care and support at school.

I do hope that the Oregon Legislature will strongly consider adjusting the funding formula to meet the needs of these children as well. It is an investment in the future of kids like mine who are benefitting immensely from the services offered by our local school districts.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sarah Gabbart
Portland, OR