

Dear Chair Neron and members of the House Committee on Education:

I am a parent of 2 Portland Public School (PPS) students and an active volunteer at Marysville Elementary School. **I am writing to voice my support of HB 2448**, which seeks to fully reimburse districts from the high cost disability account for students who need more support than what the state school fund formula for special education can provide. Currently, the High Cost Disability Grant provides essential support to districts serving students whose educational costs exceed \$30,000. However, due to insufficient funding, the grant only covers about 40% of these expenses for the 2024-25 school year. This leaves districts struggling to fill the gap, often at the expense of other critical services.

At Marysville the need for additional SpEd funding is clear. We have nearly 25% of students needing special education services this year. And, even though we have extra staffing, it is not enough. We have many students with “big behaviors” and needs that require 1 on 1 attention. There are SpEd students whose IEP state that they need 1:1 support, but they are not getting it. Or, if they are getting it, it is at the expense of other students and essential programs.

These students are our future. Their education is directly linked to other issues our society faces such as homelessness, poverty, unemployment, addiction, mental health issues, etc. We must support these children now so that they can be healthy, thriving members of our society.

I urge you to support HB 2448 to ensure Oregon schools have the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole Bendotoff