

Submitter: Ana Araujo
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953
February 17, 2025

To: Oregon House Education Committee
From: Ana Araujo, Portland Public Schools Parent

RE: HB 2953, Special Education Cap Funding

Dear Oregon representatives:

My name is Ana Araujo and I am the parent of two children who are on IEPs and are entitled to Special Education services in the Portland Public School District. I live in SE Portland (97202).

I am writing to ask you to vote in support of HB 2953: Special Education Cap Funding. As the mother of two neurodivergent children in public schools, I am very aware that our special education services in Oregon are not adequately funded. Our teachers need more support both in terms of increased staffing and material support.

When the current special education cap was set at 11%, the number of kids qualifying for IEPs was much lower than the current rate of 17%. In addition, some schools have as much as up to 28% of their students qualifying for special education services, as is the case at my older son's school. The cap does not reflect the actual needs of our students and teachers.

My family's experience over the past 4 years in Portland public schools has demonstrated the need for increased support. I must frequently pick up my child early from school because there simply is not enough support for him. When he was in 5th grade and needed much more support at school, I was frequently called in to pick him up early because I was told the school simply did not have the staff to support him. From spring break onwards in 5th grade, he only attended two full days of school. Over the years we have experienced him not receiving SLP services, not receiving his pull-out writing supports, and the frequent turnover of SpEd teachers and support staff. This takes a serious financial toll on families as it is very difficult to hold down even a part-time job when parents are frequently called-in to pick up their children. I can only imagine how difficult this is for single parents.

SpEd teachers caseloads are way too high, meaning that teachers simply cannot

provide the services are kid's are entitled for full access to their education. Most schools need more paraeducator support but do not have the funding for those positions. Any parent connected with other parents in the special education community knows that this is a common experience. We are selling our children and special educators short.

Please support HB 2953 – the Special Education Cap funding increase. Our kids and schools need this support.

Thank you for your public service.

Ana Araujo