

## **Oral Testimony for HB 2682 / Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education**

Good afternoon, Chair Courtney Neron, Vice Chairs April Dobson and Emily McIntire, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Robin Jolin, and I serve on the La Grande School District Board, where I have been a board member for 2 years.

I am here today in support of HB 2682, and I would like to thank the sponsors of this bill for prioritizing early intervention services for students with disabilities across Oregon.

As a school board member, I advocate for policies and funding that ensure all students—especially those with disabilities—have equitable access to education from the earliest possible age. In La Grande, approximately 18% of our student population receives special education services, and we've seen the critical importance of early intervention in their success.

We have implemented successful early intervention programs, including a dedicated autism room at our elementary school, which demonstrates the positive impact of early support services. However, these vital programs face significant challenges:

- Our special education needs have increased by 35%
- Federal IDEA funding, which we currently rely on, is at risk of being eliminated
- Without adequate state funding for early intervention, we risk losing crucial early childhood support services

Early intervention is vital in setting children up for success before they enter the K-12 system. Additional funding through HB 2682 would allow us to:

- Expand early childhood special education services
- Identify and address learning challenges earlier
- Provide more comprehensive support to our youngest learners
- Better prepare students for success in K-12 education

Without adequate funding for early intervention, districts like La Grande must make impossible choices about how to serve our youngest students with disabilities.

**I urge your YES vote on HB 2682 to ensure every child receives the early support they need to succeed.**

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.

