

Oral Testimony for HB 2953 / Special Education Cap Increase

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 2953, and I would like to thank the sponsors of this bill for prioritizing adequate funding for all students with disabilities across Oregon.

Approximately 18% of our students in La Grande receive special education services. However, under the current 11% funding cap, about 7% of our special education students go unfunded. This gap represents real students with real needs who deserve appropriate support.

The impact of this funding gap is significant:

- We must use general education dollars to cover special education services
- Our special education needs have increased by 35%
- Federal IDEA funding, which we currently rely on, is at risk of being eliminated

To meet our students' needs, we have:

- Opened a Life Skills and Autism building at our middle school
- Created an autism room at our elementary school
- Maintained crucial staff-to-student ratios for safety and learning

However, without adequate funding due to the cap:

- We struggle to maintain these essential programs
- General education resources are stretched thin
- We face difficult choices about how to serve all students effectively

Raising the cap through HB 2953 would:

- Provide funding for all students who qualify for special education services
- Allow us to maintain appropriate staffing ratios
- Protect general education resources
- Ensure every student receives the support they deserve

I urge your YES vote on HB 2953 to ensure every student—regardless of their needs—receives the resources they need to succeed.

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



La Grande School District
robin.jolin@lagrandesd.org
415.652.5059