

Submitter: Holly Mora
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

My children attend Boeckman Creek Primary in the West Linn-Wilsonville School District. I'm writing to urge you to support HB 2953 to fully fund special education services. With the Special Education program reimbursed at 11%, school districts are using their general funds to fill in the gaps, which affects every student. According to the Department of Education's "At a Glance School Profile", in the '23/24 school year, 16% of Boeckman Creek student's 407 students had a disability, a 5% difference that equates to 20 students.

I've volunteered at Boeckman Creek for over 3 years now, and I've witnessed the need for more SpEd professionals on countless occasions. I've seen a child having a meltdown that required five adults surrounding them just to keep that child and other students in nearby classrooms safe. I've seen a first-grade student jumping off chairs outside their classroom with no adult present. When I went into the nearest room to ask where the child should be, the teacher, visibly overwhelmed, said they just didn't have anyone else to help. Resources are spread too thin and both teachers and students suffer.

This year the West Linn/Wilsonville SD cut primary school librarians to half-time due to budget shortfalls. We only have a librarian on-site three days a week; on the other two days our library paraeducator is essentially doing double-duty. She's now the only adult in charge of 20-30 students at a time AND she's expected to do her typical tasks of preparing new books for circulation; checking materials in and out; shelving returns; helping students locate materials; preparing monthly displays for holidays and celebrations such as Black History Month, Pride Month, or religious/culture inclusivity; removing or repairing old/damaged materials, all the while correcting behavioral issues that arise. That workload is impossible for only one staff member, so every Wednesday I volunteer for a full school day to fill in the gaps. Even with parents volunteering, we can't make up for the loss of a full-time librarian, and both students and teachers at the school are affected by the absence.

Please support all Oregon students and fully fund Special Education in Oregon by raising the 11% cap.

Thank you for your service and commitment to all our Oregon kids,
Holly Moran