

February 18, 2025

Dear Representatives,

My name is Kelsey Proctor, and I have been a nationally board certified teacher for more than a decade. I am providing written commentary in support of HB2448.

Too often when teachers talk about school funding, we talk in generalities. Since we want parents and families to trust us and to keep faith in our community schools, we uphold a veil of secrecy. We cover our own faces and come to you with vague phrases. We tell you there are “funding gaps.” We say there are “unmet needs.” We want to protect our students’ privacy and dignity, and our own jobs. We have conflicting motivations, and the end result is that you receive an unclear picture of what is really occurring in schools around the state.

To circumvent this challenge, this year I decided to write a survey. I distributed it to mothers of students who qualify for IEPs in the Portland-metro area. I asked if they would consent to me amplifying their voices, so they could speak to their *own* experiences instead of me only speaking to mine. This way, I would not violate anyone’s privacy. I hoped I could find a handful of the bravest mothers who might be willing to speak the truth about the neglect and civil rights violations I already knew were happening in their children’s classrooms. I did better than I hoped. Instead of a handful, I found 90.

Following my letter, you will find 2 pages of information that will upset and disturb you. Or, at least, it should. I cried reading through the comments of mother after mother who has had to give up her life as she knew it before motherhood in order to care for the needs of her child who she loves. We need to move past “unmet needs.” We need to use the right words:

- “Left alone”
- “Unexplained bruises”
- “Subjected to being hit and punched by another student”
- “Not given agency over toileting, not being given agency over her own body”
- “Two teachers have broken bones that have needed surgery and subsequent time off as a result of lack of appropriate staffing”
- “Middle school bathrooms described by my child as unsafe “fight club hotboxes”. Widespread fighting and tripping in unsupervised hallways. His school was featured on national news for violence!”
- “Put in the corner with an ipad to keep them “safe” (but within view) from an escalated classmate”
- “Elopement from school—he walked home from school 2.4 miles and school didn’t call me till 4 o’clock and school is out at 3:30. He was supposed to be on the bus and never made it to the bus and the teacher asked the bus driver if they should call me, but they waited 30 mins to see if they could find him on camera somewhere.”
- “They have broken her personal speech device and would not repair or replace causing her to go months without. Several reports when families have visited the class where children were unsupervised.”
- “Multiple families have reported physical aggression including choking from same student without documentation.”

- “He has been left outside, alone, on numerous occasions this school year for 5 to 10 minutes before an adult noticed. I have been informed of these on several occasions which I hope is all of the times it has happened, but I can’t be sure. He is 5, and our school is on a busy street.”
- “Left on you tube for over 3 hours with headphones on while in first grade.”
- “IA’s and the long term substitute being unaware of her seizure protocol or where her seizure rescue medication was and where it was supposed to be kept.”

Should I go on? I certainly could. After fifteen years of teaching, there’s no longer much I haven’t seen. When I was a junior teacher, these stories would have made me just as livid as they do today, but I would have directed my anger at the feet of the teacher. Where was she? What on earth was happening that she allowed these abuses to occur? There would have been no end to my rage. Like Judah discovering his daughter-in-law was pregnant, I would have said the same as Judah did: ”Bring her out, and let her be burned to death!”

But I am no longer a junior teacher. As a veteran teacher, my opinions have changed. I no longer see the evil in these stories. When I hear a child has successfully eloped, I picture the elementary teacher who still comes to work every day in her 60s to teach cursive, no longer physically able to run as fast as a third grader. When I hear of the IA unaware of where the seizure rescue medication was, I wonder if there was even a nurse in the building that day. When I hear of a teacher’s broken bones, I picture her crying to her own counselor, trying to find ways to mend her heart in her own free time, saying tearfully, “I don’t know if I can do this job anymore.”

And I bring their shame to you. I take it from these mothers and these teachers and I lay it where it deserves to be: at your feet.

Were the problem new, maybe I would not be so bold. If Oregon had not been shortchanging education for longer than my seniors have been alive, maybe I would have more sympathy for the challenge of finding the funding. As it is, I am out of concern.

When Judah heard of his daughter-in-law’s failures, he focused first on his inaction to protect her. He examined his own heart and declared, “She is more righteous than I.” The women holding Oregon together are more righteous. Oregon’s teachers are still showing up every day to support the most vulnerable members of our society, even at harm to their own health. Oregon’s mothers are still shouldering the substantial burden of your inefficiency and callousness; they are continuing to be good every day to people who have done what is evil to them. The time is now. Act by passing HB2953, HB2448, and HB2682.

Thank you for your time. Sincerely,

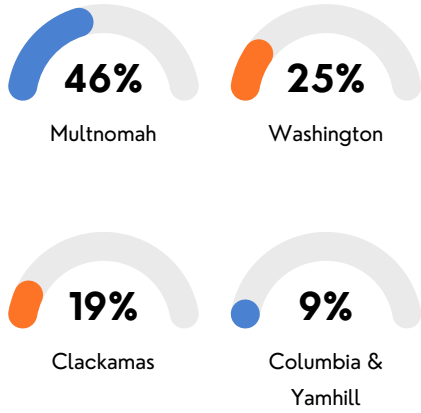
Kelsey Bickers Proctor, NBCT
Storytelling teacher at Gladstone High School
Citizen of Gladstone, Oregon

Demographics

In 2025 I wrote, administered, and compiled results from a survey to amplify the voices of 90 mothers whose children ages 4-19 qualify for special education in 22 school districts in the greater Portland, OR area.

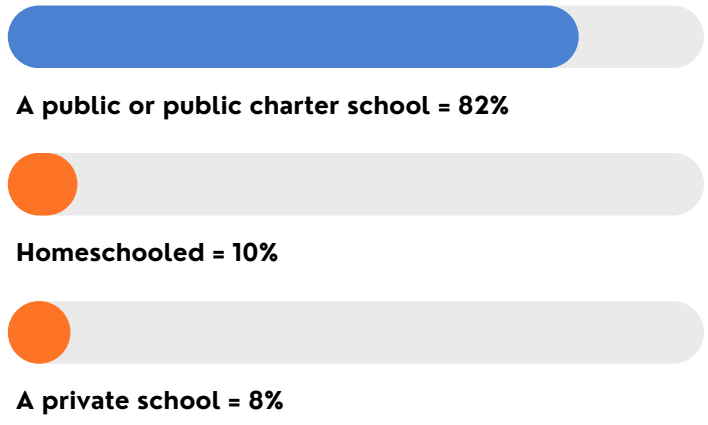
Where the Students Live

I accepted responses from Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Columbia, and Yamhill counties.



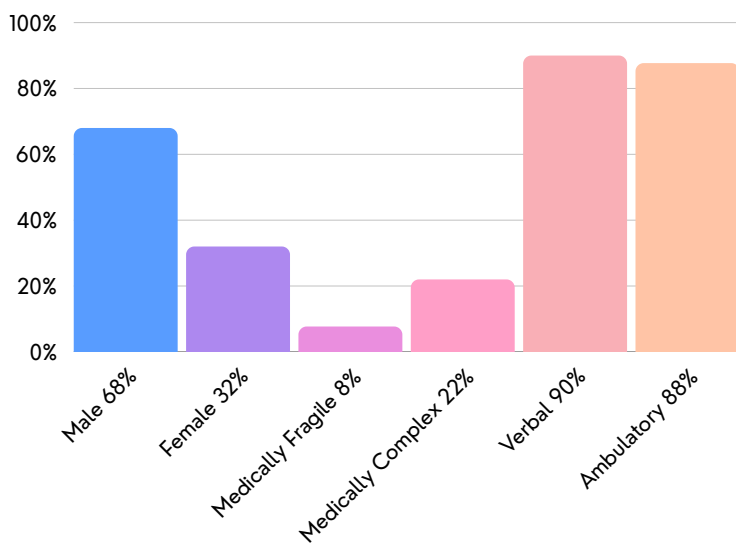
Where the Students Learn

I asked mothers where their children learn.



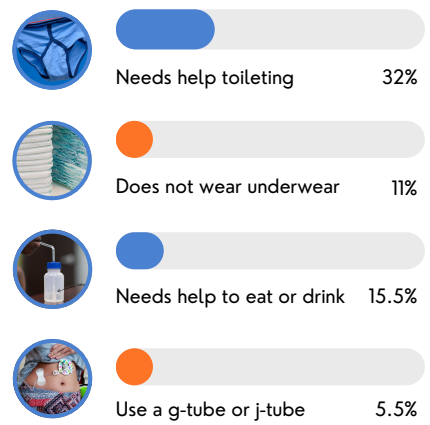
Student Attributes

I asked mothers about ways others might define their child.



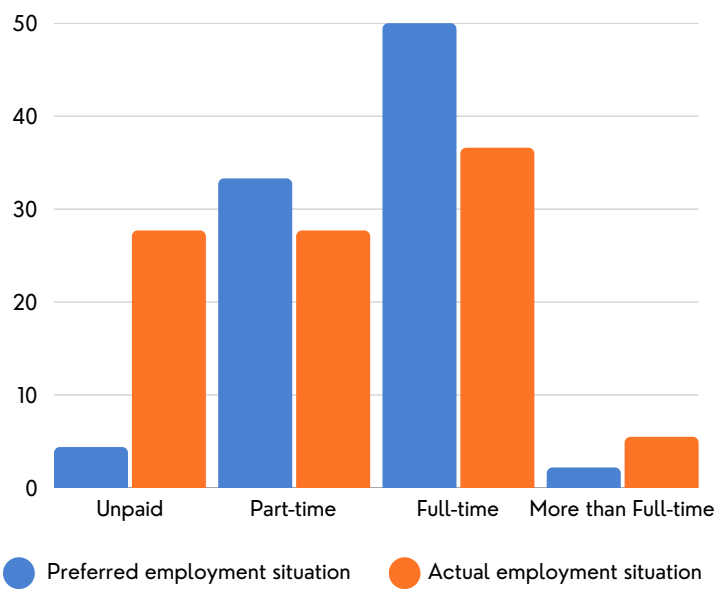
Independence

I asked mothers whether their child needs help with survival needs.



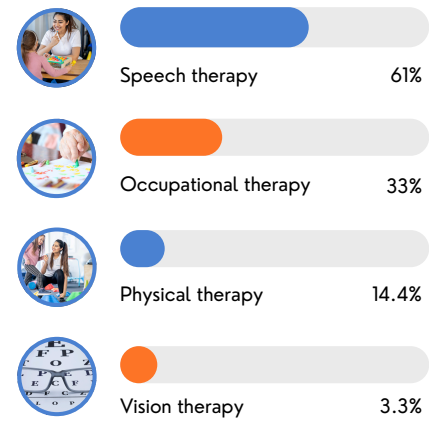
Parental Employment

I asked mothers whether a lack of special education services were impacting their careers.



Additional Therapies

I asked mothers whether their child received additional therapy at school.



Placements & Services

I asked mothers whether they agreed with their child's placement.

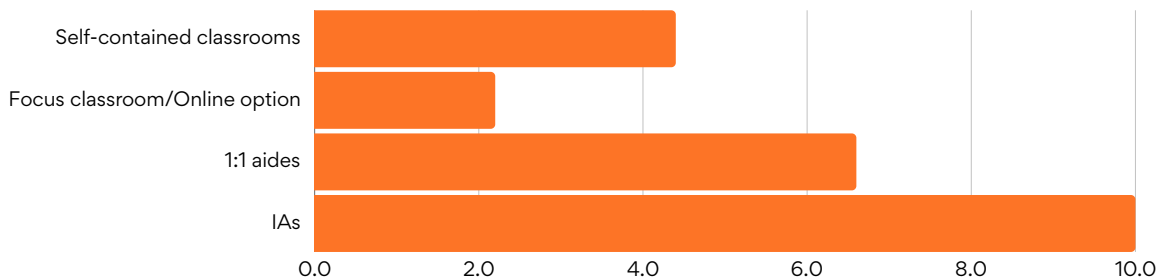
23%
said no

I asked mothers if their child had lost services they previously had despite wanting to keep them.

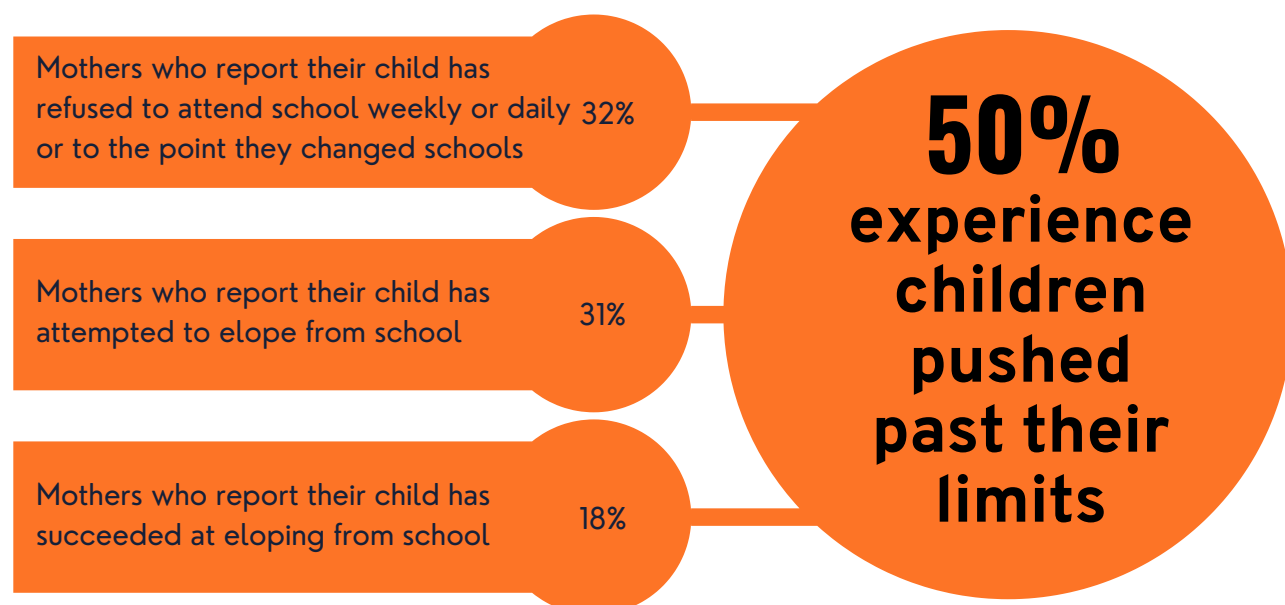
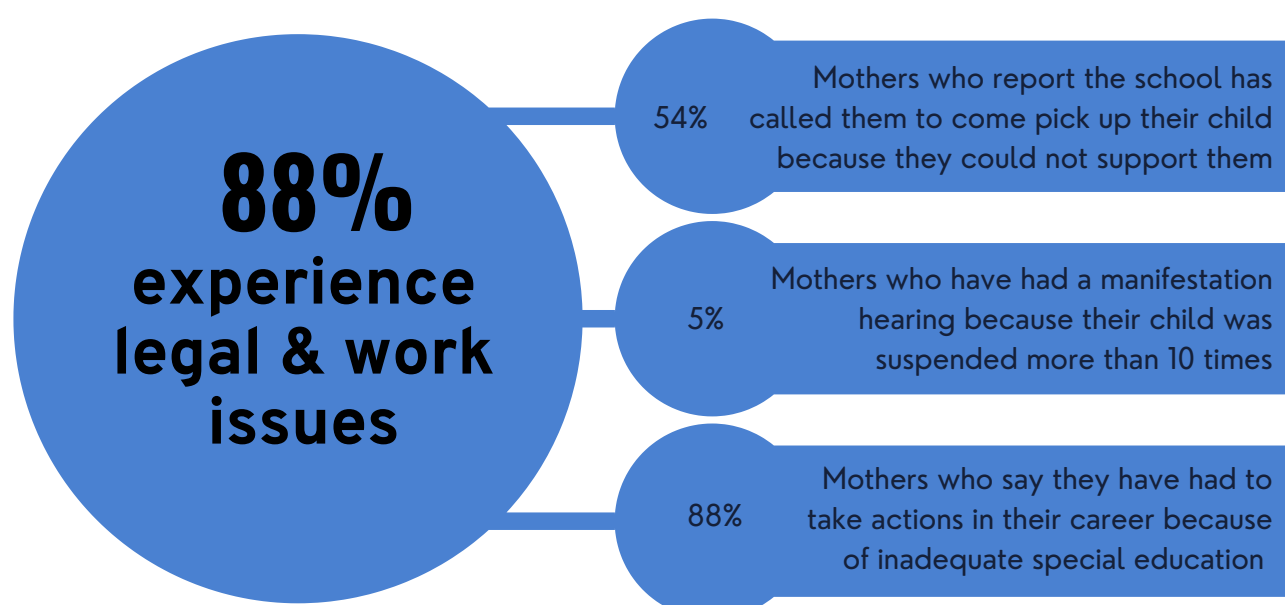
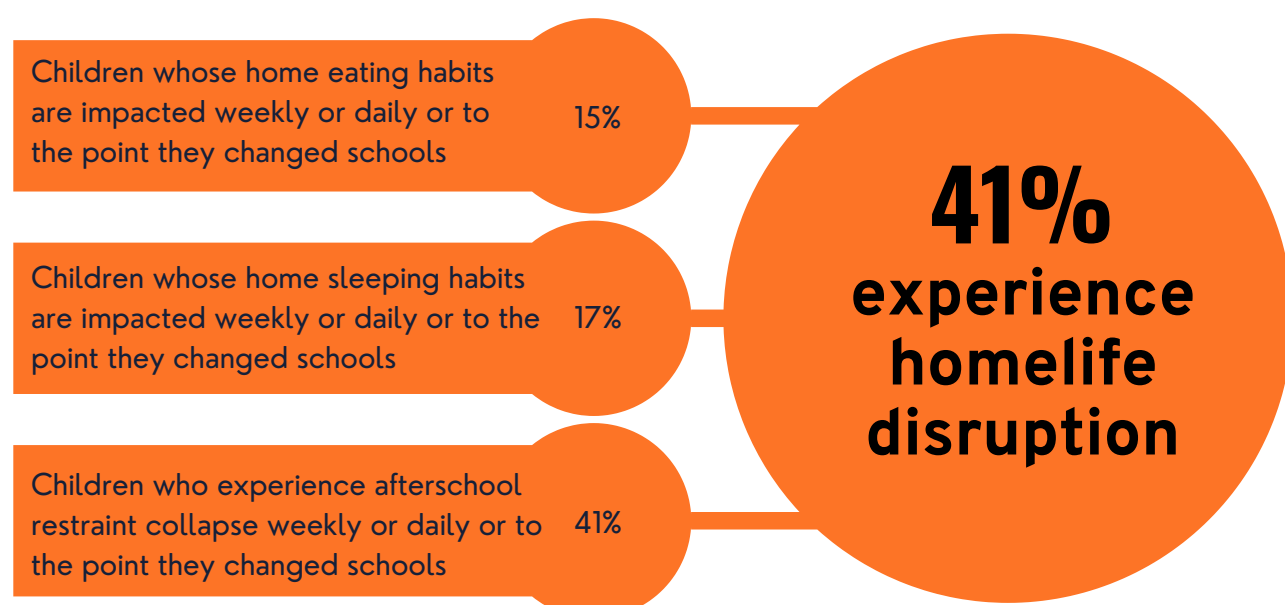
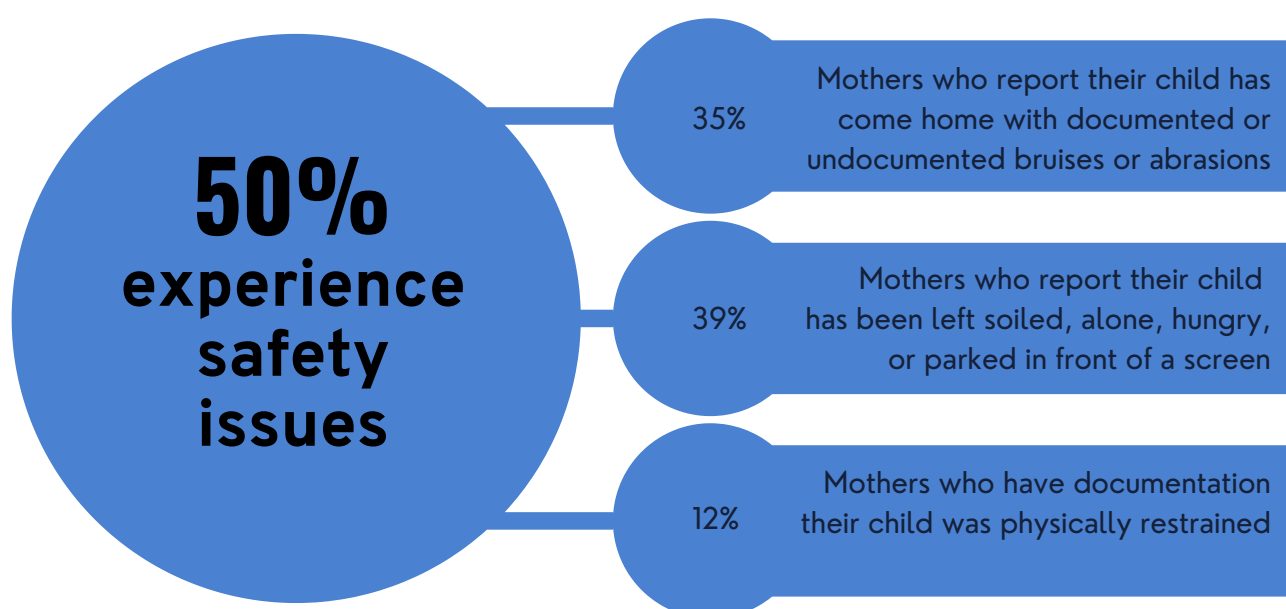
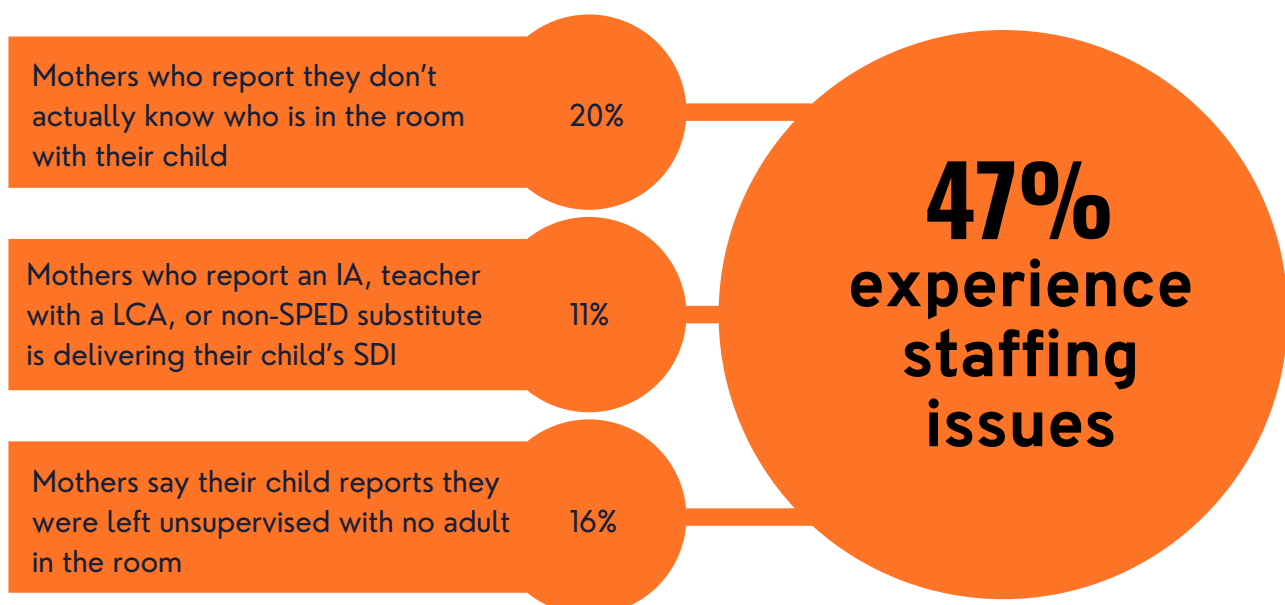
23%
said yes

Cut Services

I asked what services had been cut.



What the Mothers Report



I have been a nationally board certified teacher for more than 10 years. I believe in special education and want all students to succeed! Any legislator with further questions is welcome to email me at kelsey nbct@gmail.com.

In mothers' own words

“The classrooms are severely lacking the appropriate amount of aides to children.”

**Jules M.
Hillsboro**

“The resources are not there to support kids at the level that is needed. It makes for unsafe situations and classrooms that can make problems worse.”

**Leslie M.
PPS**

“There is not a day that goes by... where... services written into IEPs are not being provided.”

**Laurel O.
PPS**

“Our children’s needs are NOT being met. Special Education teachers are stretched too thin, and there aren’t enough trained assistants.”

**Lillieth G.
Tigard-Tualatin**

In mothers' own words

“I can tell you that para-educators don't feel their training from the district is adequate for the level of critical care they are providing.”

**Hazel W.
PPS**

“Because my daughter does not have “explosive,” loud, or disruptive behaviors she is often neglected as staff are having to focus on more disruptive students because there aren't enough of them.”

**Victoria S.
PPS**

“I have been denied services due to lack of ability to hire additional employees”

**Amber L.
North Clackamas**

“School districts don't receive enough money to properly train staff, supply special equipment ...have proper curriculum for SDI, provide direct services like OT/PT, or equip school events to be ADA approved”

**Casie H.
Lake Oswego**

In mothers' own words

“It is not fair to leave this population behind. This is discrimination.”
Sara S.
PPS

“Kids deserve to feel safe at school with their teachers and providers. Increasing their pay and resources and funding would make it easier to help them.”
Megan A.,
Scappoose

“Please please do not take this away from vulnerable kids and their families.”
Jill C.
Beaverton

“Parenting a child like ours is unfathomably difficult. Our lives have become so isolated. We cannot eat in restaurants. We cannot socialize. These kids are the most vulnerable members of the school”
Lasara J.
PPS

In mothers' own words

“It has impacted my ability to attend higher education.”
Amanda S.
Beaverton

“My child has two parents with advanced degrees. We own our own home and always have enough money... We speak English fluently and are US citizens. And yet, we are still struggling because of the lack of special education funding.”
Gina L.
PPS

“I have been fired due to my child needing me/the school not meeting his needs.”

Amber L.
North Clackamas

“Because of the prolonged impact of the support needs, we have drained our savings and dipped into retirement accounts to try to make ends meet.”
Sarah H.
Sherwood

In mothers' own words

“I lost a career that was important to me. I lost my ability to contribute to my retirement fund. My long term economic health is impacted.”

Mother of a 9 year old boy

“I couldn't work... for two years... due to not being able to find care for her. Even early intervention said she could only be in a preschool promise class for two hours.”

Mother of an 11 year old girl

“I cannot progress in my career or my earning potential.”

Mother of a 10 year old boy

“I don't know what it would be like for my child to be able to attend a full day of school. ...Our neighborhood school tries and they are kind and adaptable, but they don't have the resources.”

Mother of a 6 year old girl

In mothers' own words

“Our kiddos are our world and we would do anything for them to be treated like everyone else”
K. G.
Canby

“Failure to fund SPED will not make student needs vanish. Unmet needs are paid for by disabled students, their families, and the entire school community.”
Aine M.
PPS

“These kids grow up. Fix the issues now before they are more expensive.”
Shasta K.
West Linn-
Wilsonville

“The program my son is currently in is amazing... I believe my son's progress is based on the consistency of the teacher. She has been assaulted by many students and she still shows up for them.”
Brandi S.
McMinnville