

Submitter: Sara Schultz  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2953

I'm a parent of nine-year-old twins who've both qualified for special education under an IEP at Portland public schools. They are impacted by dyslexia, neurodivergence and anxiety. In the last five years that we've part of the public school system, I've awakened to the fact that there's not equal educational opportunity for all students, despite what the federal law says. By continually underfunding special education, our state is harming the most vulnerable students, while putting this on the backs of families who are unfairly burdened with the responsibility of their children's education and safety because there is not appropriate staffing or training to adequately educate all students.

In the case of my children, I've been forced to homeschool one of them while my other twin attends in person. We bring one twin daily to the school to receive special education while the rest of the time he is at home alone. His education is piecemealed together by tutors, myself and occupational therapy through his health insurance. He is significantly behind and he wants to attend school. We are fortunate that I've been able to put this together for him. However, it is an unsustainable solution.

His twin sister received special education and summer school after I finally got her qualified for an IEP for academic assistance in April 2023 and has since made significant strides. She went from telling me that school was too hard, too fast and asking me to hold her back to finally feeling confident this year for the first time ever.

I am aware of countless other families who are in the same situation that we are in. Forced to homeschool a child who was not able to be appropriately educated at school in the Portland public school district. I know this is not just Portland public. It is statewide.

Inadequately funding special education also excessively burdens our special education teachers who are taking on the most delicate students. I have witnessed continual turnover of para educators and special education teachers due to burnout. As well, this creates a heavy load for general education teachers, who are trying to make up for kids who should be receiving special education.

Oregon espouses to be a state where we value equity & integrity. We are not showing these values in the way that we treat our special education population.

Please pass this bill and take care of the most vulnerable of our students -those who

will and do fall through the cracks without having adequate funding.

Sincerely,  
Dr Sara Schultz  
Optometric physician and parent  
Portland, OR