

Submitter: Nina Senaga-Freauff  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2423

Chair Neron, Vice- Chairs Dobson and McIntire, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nina Senaga-Freauff, and I have been a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) in Portland Public Schools (PPS) for 26 years. I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB2423, which will establish the School Based Health Professionals Taskforce to ensure that licensing board rules accurately reflect the realities of working in the school settings.

Last spring, PPS attempted to justify the "decentralization" of the Feeding Team. They took the experienced/ specifically trained SLPs and Occupational Therapists- (OTs) off the team of specialists, saying school based SLPs and OTs were trained/ would be trained enough in short order. Differing interpretations of "competency" in licensure language put students at risk. Having an experienced SLP on the team has since been partially reinstated following significant advocacy.

We had more than 30 SLPs in PPS concerned about compromising national and state licensure due to working outside of areas of competency, not to mention the fear of causing actual harm to an at-risk student. This was all due to the interpretation of licensure wording by non- SLP administration in the district. We lost some highly experienced, amazing SLPs from PPS as a result of the added stress and lack of professional understanding/ respect.

I urge you to support HB 2423 so that Oregon's licensing boards can establish clear, appropriate guidelines for school based professionals, improving both professional retention and student access to necessary services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nina Senaga-Freauff MS CCC-SLP