

## **HB 2423 Written Testimony Template**

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

My name is **Teresa Barcenas**, and I am a **speech-language pathologist at the Clackamas Education Service District (ESD) in the Life Enrichment Education Program (LEEP)**. I am submitting this 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 school settings.

Our Life Enrichment Education Program (LEEP) provides a comprehensive education for school-age students with complex disabilities and communication needs. Through Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), LEEP supports students in accessing academic, social-emotional, communication and life skills curriculum and instruction. Multidisciplinary classroom teams include special education teachers, educational assistants, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, behavior specialists, nurses, adaptive physical education teachers and others as needed. The program focuses on academics, communication, personal management, decision making, independence, self-advocacy, practical living skills, vocational skills, leisure/recreation activities, social skills and access to a full life.

**School-based health professionals work in unique conditions that differ from clinical settings, and licensing standards should reflect those realities.** When serving the moderate-to-severe population, there continues to be inconsistencies around Scope of Practice for the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) around serving “medically fragile” students in the school setting. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) shared that the recommendation is 100% synchronous supervision for SLPAs who work directly with “medically fragile” students. The Scope defines medically fragile as an individual who is acutely ill and in an unstable health condition. This definition leaves some room for independent clinical judgment – for example, the presence of a trach alone does not define the individual as medically fragile as the clinician needs to consider the full medical picture of the individual and the nature of the SLPA’s intervention with the patient. This makes the Scope of Practice confusing to understand for both SLPs and SLPAs in the school-setting, as most LEEP students are considered “medically fragile,” yet there is no state-wide guidance on what defines “medically fragile” and how an SLPA can be ethically supervised 100% of the time by the SLP.

I urge you to support **HB2423** so that Oregon’s licensing boards can establish clear, appropriate guidelines for school-based health professionals, improving both professional retention and student access to necessary services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,**  
**Teresa Barcenas, M.S. CCC-SLP**  
**Speech-Language Pathologist**